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MONTANUS REDIVIVUS;

O R,

MONTANISM REVIVED,

I N T H E

Principles *and* Discipline

O F T H E

METHODISTS:

(Commonly called *Swadlers*)

B E I N G

The Substance of a SERMON upon 1 *John* iv. 1.
preached in the Parish Church of *Hollymount*, in the
Diocese of *Tuam*, the third *Sunday* after *Easter*, in
the Year 1756.

To which are added,

Several LETTERS, which passed between the
Rev. JOHN WESLEY, and the AUTHOR.

A L S O A N

A P P E N D I X.

By the Rev. Mr. JAMES CLARK,
A Presbyter of the Diocese of TUAM.

D U B L I N :

Printed and sold by H. SAUNDERS in *High-street*, at the
Corner of *Christ-church-lane*.

M D C C L X.

100 . 9 . 561 .



T O T H E

Right Reverend Father in God,

W I L L I A M,

L O R D B I S H O P O F

Clonfert and Killmacduagh.

M Y L O R D,

HERE are two special Reasons
T which have induced me (tho' a
Stranger to your Lordship) to
assume the Boldness of laying the fol-
lowing Discourse and Letters at your
Lordship's Feet, and inscribing them to
your Name.

A 2

I. BE-

DEDICATION.

1. BECAUSE they do almost intirely owe their publick Appearance in the World, to your Lordship's generous Encouragement and Benefaction, and consequently have thereby acquired a Kind of natural Right to your Lordship's Countenance and Protection. They are now, my Lord, by your own Liberality, become, if I may so say, your Children by Adoption; and will therefore, I hope, stand acquitted of any undue Presumption, in thus humbly craving both at your Lordship's Hands.

2. As the Divine, or (which I take to be the same in Effect) the Apostolical Right of Episcopacy, is none of the least Questions controverted between me and Mr. *Wesley* in the following Letters, whether could I more naturally think of applying for Patronage and Protection, than to some one of that venerable Order? And among them, to whom more justly (had I not been by Duty and Inclination induced thereto) than to your Lordship, who have taken such Pains about, and
so

DEDICATION.

so generously contributed to the Publication of them?

THERE are, my Lord, a Set of Enthusiastic Pharisees in Practice, but perfect Latitudinarians in Principle, sprung up among us, who, at their first setting out, laid it down as a Principle to themselves, by which they resolved to govern themselves in the Propagation of Methodism, That * Orthodoxy, or right and sound Belief, was but a slender, if it may be deemed any Part at all of Religion.

IN Consequence of this pernicious Maxim, they declare themselves quite indifferent † as to any Form of Church Government, whether Presbyterian, Independent, or Episcopal, and look upon the latter in no other Light than that of some human Law or Constitution, subject to be changed at Pleasure. Hence they positively deny its divine Right and perpetual Obligation. No Wonder therefore that they do in all Things, almost,

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act

* See Mr. *Wesley's True Account of the Methodists*, pag. 4.

† See Mr. *Wesley's Discourse on Catholick Spirit*.

DEDICATION.

act in a barefaced Defiance to the Authority and Jurisdiction of the Bishops, the chief Governors of the Church; they have, without their Consent and Approbation, formed Societies or Conventicles, under certain Rules of Discipline and Government of their own Invention, appointing Leaders, Directors, Superintendants, &c. over them: They have set up a new Ministry of their own, contrary to, and independent of, the Ministry of the Church; committing the preaching of the Word of Reconciliation, and the Exercise of the Power of the Keys, to mere Laymen and Mechanicks, in direct Opposition to an express Article of that very Church whereof they do, with an amazing Confidence and Assurance, pretend to be not only Members, but the only true Members of it.

THE Truth is, my Lord, tho' they do upon Occasions come to our Churches and communicate with us, yet they have plainly enough insinuated * to the
World,

* See for this the same Mr. *Wesley's Persuasive to Communion*, towards the latter End.

DEDICATION.

World, that they not only wait for a seasonable Opportunity, and more able Heads to form a new Church, and make a total Separation from us. This verifies the Observation of St. *Cyprian*, who, I remember, somewhere says, that Heresies and Schisms have and daily do spring from no other Root than Disrespect to the Person and Disobedience to the Authority of the Bishop, who, in the Language of the same venerable Father and glorious Martyr of Christ, is the *unus Judex vice Christi*, the one Judge, instead of Christ, to his own Church, which he is to govern as one that must give an Account of his Administration to the Lord, and to no other.

THESE Observations of St. *Cyprian* we have, my Lord, seen verified among ourselves in the great Rebellion of 1641, in the last Century, when, upon the Dissolution of our Government both in Church and State, such an Inundation of vile and abominable Heresies, Schisms, and Sacrileges overflowed the three Nations, that they seemed as fertile in the

DEDICATION.

Production of Monsters in Religion, as ever *Afric* was of Monsters in Nature : How far, or whether this may be the fatal Consequence of that Spirit of Enthusiasm, which is always (I had almost said naturally and necessarily) attended with Disobedience to spiritual Superiors, and which is now let loose among us, I shall not take upon me to determine ; but this, my Lord, I think I may venture to affirm, that if the same Causes may be concluded to produce the same Effects, the Consequence of the present Spirit of Enthusiasm among us, especially as it has and is daily getting Ground in our very Armies, may in time prove as destructive to our Church and State, as the same Spirit of Enthusiasm and Disobedience did in the great Rebellion of 1641.

THESE Things being so, I think, my Lord, the Question concerning the Divine Right of Episcopacy to be of very great Consequence and Importance to the Purity, Peace, and Safety of our Church and State, in their present Frame and
Con-

DEDICATION.

Constitution; and that, consequently, it is not only the Duty but the Interest of every true Son of the Church, upon all Occasions, according to their Abilities and Opportunities, to assert the Authority and Jurisdiction of Bishops, to vindicate the Honour and Dignity of their Persons, and steadily to adhere to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Government of our Church in her present happy Constitution; with regard to which I think I may boldly venture to affirm, she comes nearest to the Primitive and Apostolick Pattern of any Christian Church upon Earth. Towards this, my Lord, I have ventured to contribute my poor Mite, as far as my Adversary gave me Occasion or Provocation; and tho' I am sensible it is far, very far, from what might have been done upon the Occasion by an abler Hand, yet as it was my All, and what I could attain to, I hope it will be accepted by the Fathers of our Church as the Widow's Mite was by our common Lord and Master: However, such as it is I humbly offer it to
your

DEDICATION.

your Lordship, not indeed as any way worth your Lordship's Acceptance, but as the only Testimony I can give the World of that great Duty, Respect, and Gratitude for all your Lordship's Favours, with which I have the Honour to be, my Lord, may it please your Lordship,

Your Lordship's most dutiful,

Most obliged, and most

Obedient humble Servant,

JAMES CLARK.



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MONTANUS REDIVIVUS, &c.



I JOHN IV. I.

Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God, because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.



SAINT *John*, the Author of this Epistle, was the youngest of all the Apostles, and having a particular Promise from his divine Master, that he should not taste of Death, till he came in Judgment to take Vengeance on the *Jews* his Crucifiers; he, in consequence of both these Advantages, outlived and survived all the rest of his Fellow-Apostles, and consequently had the Mortification to hear of and to see many Pretenders to the Spirit, and many false Prophets, who endeavoured to corrupt the Simplicity of that Gospel, which was delivered to the Church by himself and his Fellow-Apostles. For this Reason he warns the Christians of his Time, in the Words of my Text, not to give Credit to every Spirit that would obtrude itself upon them for the Spirit of God, without a fair Trial whether their Pretences were true or false; because otherwise they were in manifest Danger of being deceived, there being so many Pretenders to the Spirit, and so many false Prophets gone out into the World.

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THE Advice supposes, that there were Rules whereby the Spirits might be tried and known, whether they were of God or not; for otherwise what else was it but a vain Piece of Mockery to desire them to try the Spirits, if there were no Rule to try them by, by Application to which the Triers might be secured, that they were not deceived. And,

1. THIS Rule could not be any living, infallible Judge, always in being, to whom the Faithful were obliged to resort, for Resolution of their Doubts, upon the Appearance of any new or extraordinary Spirit (as the Advocates of the Church of *Rome* contend) for if this were the Case, either St. *John* himself, in this very Place, where he had so fair an Occasion (and which he could not well, or consistently with the faithful Discharge of his Office, avoid) or some other Apostle, in some of their Writings, would have pointed out this infallible Judge to us, and would have told us plainly who he was; or, in a Word, would have described him after such a manner, that there would be no Danger or Possibility of mistaking his Person, or the Place of his Residence or Abode. But there is a most profound Silence in all the New Testament, concerning such an infallible Judge, always in being, and consequently no such infallible Judge was appointed by Christ or his Apostles, for Trial of Spirits. Nor yet,

2. CAN the greatest outward Show of Piety, Sanctity or Devotion, be either a safe or sufficient Rule, to try whether a Spirit be from God, or not; because it is very possible that the greatest Villainy, Corruption, and Hypocrisy may be concealed under such an outward Show; as in the Case of the Scribes and Pharisees of old, and especially because St. *Paul** assures us, that Satan is often transformed into an Angel of Light, and consequently may, very possibly, deceive

* 2 Cor. xi. 14.

ceive^b us, under the greatest and strongest Pretences to Piety and Devotion. Moreover, outward Piety and Devotion are the Sheep's Cloathing, under which false Prophets generally (in order to deceive more successfully) make their Appearance; and consequently the greatest outward Show of Piety and Devotion, can be no safe or sufficient Rule to try whether a Spirit be from God, or not. We must therefore proceed farther, and see what other Rules there may be for the Trial of Spirits; and these following Rules seem to me to be very safe and sufficient for that End and Purpose, as being all either founded on Reason, or warranted by Scripture Authority, or Example.

I. ANY Spirit which does, under any Pretence whatsoever, endeavour to withdraw us from the Worship of the One True God, to the Worship of any created Being, how great or excellent soever it may be, and consequently to Idolatry of any Kind or Degree, must certainly be a false Spirit, and cannot be of God.

THIS was a Rule given by *Moses*^a to the Children of *Israel*; for if any Prophet or Dreamer of Dreams should come to them, in order or with a Design to seduce them from the Worship of JEHOVAH, to the Worship of the Gods of their neighbouring Nations, he commanded them instantly, without more ado, to put such a Prophet or Dreamer of Dreams to Death, even tho' the Prophecy or Dream, upon the Credit of which he endeavoured to seduce them, had come never so punctually to pass: And very justly, because to suppose or imagine that such a Spirit could be from God, was to suppose or imagine, that God would be aiding and

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assisting

^b This appears by the History of Major *Weir*, the supposed *Scotch* Wizard, than whom no Man ever had a greater outward Appearance of Piety and Devotion; he preached and prayed like an Angel, and yet all the while he was a sworn Slave and Vassal to the Devil.

^c Deut. xiii.

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assisting to the dishonouring of himself, and giving his Glory to another; and if God were thus divided against himself, how then could his Kingdom stand?

2. ANY Spirit that imposes any necessary Article of Faith, or any necessary Point of Practice upon the Consciences of Men, contrary to, or besides, or over and above what is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, must certainly be a Spirit of Falshood, and cannot be of or from God.

FOR Scripture being confessedly a Divine Revelation, to admit or allow any thing as necessary matter of Revelation, which is either contrary to Scripture, or over and above what is therein expressly contained, or deducible from thence by clear and evident Deduction of Reason, is to affirm either that God contradicts himself, or that Scripture does not contain Matter sufficient for Salvation; the former of which is Blasphemy so much as to imagine, and the latter (to call it by no worse a Name at present) is a very false and dangerous Error.

3. ANY Spirit whatsoever that endeavours, upon any Pretence whatsoever, to weaken or overthrow any known or evident Principle of natural Religion, in order to establish or enforce any Mystery of revealed Religion, must certainly be a false Spirit, and cannot be from God.

THERE are only two ways by which God does, or indeed can, reveal his Will to Mankind, the one by Nature and Reason, and the other by immediate Revelation. Now these two are not opposite or contradictory the one to the other; but, on the contrary, they are subservient to, and mutually support each other; and therefore to set them at Variance with each other, that is, to endeavour by Revelation to weaken or overthrow the Religion of Nature, or by the Religion of Nature to supersede revealed Religion, is to endeavour, in Effect, to banish all Religion (whether natural or revealed) out of the World, which can never be

be supposed to be the Design of any Spirit proceeding from God.

4. ANY Person whatsoever, that pretends to a Spirit of immediate Inspiration and Revelation from the Holy Ghost, without proving his Pretensions by such Credentials as the Prophets under the Old Testament, and the Apostles and other inspired Persons under the New Testament, proved their Inspirations by, that is, by real and undoubted Miracles, must be either a deluded Enthusiast, or an arrant Cheat and Impostor.

God never sent any Person with an extraordinary Message or Commission to the World, neither did he ever endow any with an extraordinary Spirit of Inspiration or Revelation, without empowering him to prove his Mission, and the Truth of his Inspirations and Revelations, with real Miracles. And it is but reasonable it should be so; for he that pretends to have the Truth of God in his Tongue, should have the Power of God in his Hands, to prove the Truth of his Pretensions; otherwise, when there are so many Sorts and Sizes of Pretenders to immediate Inspiration and Revelation, all differing from each other, the Faithful would be at a Loss which to give credit to, there being no imaginable Reason why we should believe one more than another, upon the credit of their own bare Affirmation; for this Kind or Tribe of Pretenders are generally very confident and positive, and therefore without some infallible Test or Rule to judge of their several and different Pretensions, no Man can rationally believe either the one or the other. In this Case we may truly say to them, what the Pharisees falsely said to our blessed Saviour, *ye bear Record of yourselves, therefore your Record is not true*; and until they can truly answer as he did, *the Works that I do (that is, the Miracles which I work) in my Father's Name, they bear Record of me*, we may, without the least Prejudice to Truth

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or

^d John viii. 13.

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or Offence to Charity, conclude that they are deluded Enthusiasts, or arrant Cheats and Impostors.

IN a Word, this has been constantly the way in which God has been pleased to confirm the Mission of all those, whom he has been pleased to endow with a Spirit of immediate Inspiration and Revelation; and the Church of God has, in all Ages, condemned all Pretenders to such a Spirit, without such Credentials, for deluded Enthusiasts or Impostors.

5. ANY Spirit that assumes to itself an Authority or Power of becoming a publick Preacher or Teacher of God's Word in the Church, or offering and presenting the Prayers of the Faithful to the Throne of Grace, without a regular Call from the chief Governors of that Church, wherein they thus take upon themselves the Office of publick Preachers and Teachers, or without an immediate and special Commission from Heaven, testified by Miracles, is a false and schismatical Spirit, and can never be from God; and all those who abet, countenance, or encourage such a Spirit, are guilty of Sacrilege, and a manifest Contempt of, and Disrespect to, the Ordinance and Institution of Christ.

IN short, it is a manifest Spice of the Sin of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, whom the Earth swallowed up alive, together with all that appertained to them, for their sacrilegious Presumption and Incroachment on the sacerdotal Office: These Levites imagined, that there was no such mighty Matter in slaying the Sacrifices, laying them in order upon the Altar, and burning a little Incense, but that they themselves were as well qualified to execute such Functions as the Priest: Their Pretence for this was, that they were as holy as the Priests; why then might they not do these Things as well and to as good Purpose as they did. *Ye take too much upon you*, (said they to *Moses* and *Aaron*) *seeing all the Congregation is holy, and the Lord is among them.* Even so, in Effect, do their

their modern Disciples argue; 'Ye take too much upon you, ye Bishops and Priests, since the Laity are holy, and since they know and read the Scriptures as well as you, why then may not they preach as well as you?' But if the Levites, who were an inferior Order of the *Jewish* Clergy, appointed to assist the Priests in the Service of the Tabernacle, as the Deacons, in the Christian Church, were instituted to be Assistants to the Christian Priesthood, in the Celebration of the Christian Mysteries, were thus fearfully and terribly punished, for incroaching upon such Offices and Functions as were reserved for the superior Order of Priests; what may not mere Laymen, who have no relation at all to the Priesthood, dread and fear, for incroaching upon the priestly Office? And although they may escape the Judgment of *Corab* and his Associates in this Life, it is much to be feared that they and their Abettors (unless they repent and recant their Errors) may meet with a much severer Punishment in the Life of the World to come.

OUR blessed Saviour himself did not take upon him to be a publick Preacher or Teacher in the *Jewish* Church, till he was commissioned by an audible Voice from Heaven: The Apostles were commanded to tarry at *Jerusalem*, until they were commissioned from Heaven to enter upon their publick Office, and were accordingly, in ten Days after our Saviour's Ascension into Heaven, authorised so to do, by the miraculous Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, on the Day of Pentecost. The seven first Deacons, though all good Men, and full of the Holy Ghost, were not allowed so much as to take care of the Poor, or to distribute the Alms of the Faithful among them (which was the original Office they were instituted to) until they were publickly ordained by the Hands of the * Apostles: And it is very remarkable, that though *Paul* and *Barnabas* were some time before called to be super-

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numerary

* Acts vi. 5, 6.

8 MONTANUS REDIVIVUS.

numerary Apostles at large, yet when it pleased the Holy Ghost to set them apart for a peculiar or particular Ministry, it was thought fit by the same Holy Spirit, that they should be ordained for that Ministry by the Church at *Antioch*; for whilst the Church there ministred unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the Work whereunto I have called them; and when they had fasted and prayed they laid their Hands on them, and sent them away*†.

I GRANT indeed that a Layman, having a competent Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and of the Christian Doctrine, coming to a Country where the Name of Christ is either not known or not acknowledged, and being moved with an holy Zeal, and a suitable Resolution to attempt the Conversion of the Inhabitants, in that case he may lawfully become a publick Preacher. But the Case is quite different in a Christian Church, formed and settled under proper Officers, according to the Rules of the Gospel, and the Laws and Discipline of the Society; for in that Case no mere Layman, how holy or learned soever he may be, can, without a sacrilegious Presumption, take upon himself the Office of a publick Preacher, or Teacher of God's Word; because it is against all Rule and Order, it creates Confusion, Disorder, and Faction, and is utterly inconsistent with the Difference and Distinction between Clergy and Laity, which Christ has settled and appointed in his Church. In one Word, a Layman may as well take upon him to administer the Sacraments, and perform all other ecclesiastical Functions, as to be a publick Preacher, having as much Authority (that is, in Truth, none at all) for the one as for the other.

LASTLY, any Spirit that takes upon itself to make the Way to Heaven more narrow and difficult than either Jesus Christ or his holy Apostles have made it, and

† Acts xiii. 2, 3.

and that requires such Things from the Faithful, as necessary to Salvation, which (morally speaking) are not in the Power of human Nature, in its present State and Condition, to perform, is certainly a false Spirit, and consequently cannot be from God. For this is evidently to preach another Gospel, different from that which Jesus Christ and his Apostles preached, which whosoever presumes to do (even tho' he were an Angel from Heaven) we are warranted by ^a *St. Paul* to pronounce him accursed.

THERE might be other Rules assigned for the Trial of Spirits, but these which I have laid down seem to me to be abundantly sufficient, and are withal so plain and easy, and so obvious to the meanest Capacity, and all of them so agreeable to Reason, and to Scripture Authority and Example, that so long as we hold to them, in our Judgment upon any new or extraordinary Spirit, there can be no great Fear or Danger of our being deceived by any false Pretenders to the Spirit, or to Prophecy.

LET US NOW proceed, and bring some of these Pretenders to the Spirit, both antient and modern, to a fair Trial by these Rules; and then let every one judge for himself, whether they be of God, or whether they may be ranked among those false Prophets which, in *St. John's* time, or since, were gone out into the World.

I BEGIN with the antient, and among them shall insist only upon one, because he was the grand Patriarch of all succeeding Enthusiasts, or Pretenders to the Spirit; and especially because he at first set up with the very same Pretences that our modern Enthusiasts, the Methodists, have done; and because, if we may believe a very learned and ingenious Author of the last ^b Century, we feel the ill Effects of his Spirit both in the Eastern and Western Churches to this very Day.

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^a Gal. i. 8. ^b See the excellent Historical Account of Montanism, published by *Dr. Hicks*.

IT was about the middle ^a of the second Century of Christianity that *Montanus*, the Arch-Heretick, and Proto-Patriarch of all Enthusiasts, made his Appearance in the World: He was a Native of *Pbrygia*, and was no sooner converted to the Christian Faith, than he appeared very zealous for the Honour and Improvement of his new Religion; which Temper, when unattended with Calmness and Solidity of Judgment, are apt to hurry those that are possessed of it into violent Extremes, and in the Conclusion proves very pernicious to Religion, which was the Case of *Montanus*.

HE began (as all Hereticks and Schismaticks, and especially our modern Methodists, generally do) with accusing and complaining of the Bishops and their Clergy, as careless and negligent in their Duties, and remits in their Discipline: He taxed them with want of Zeal, and with falling from their first Love; with neglecting the Spirit and Life of Christianity, and contenting themselves merely and only with the bare and outward Letter, and Form of it. In a Word, he confidently charged them with being intirely void of the Spirit, and with leading mere animal and physical Lives.

HEREUPON, without any Authority either from God or Man, being neither Bishop, Priest, nor Deacon, but a mere Layman, he set up for a Reformer of these Abuses, and for raising Christianity, by a new and before unheard of Dispensation (of which he pretended the Holy Ghost had appointed him to be the Administrator) to a higher pitch of Spirituality and Perfection, than ever it was hitherto attempted to be raised to, not only by the Bishops and Clergy, but even by the Apostles themselves. These Pretences, together with the great Strictness and Regularity (at least in outward Appearance) of his Life and Conversation, made him be soon taken Notice of, and admired and followed by

^a In the Reign of *M. Antoninus* and *Q. Verus*.

by Numbers of simple but well-meaning Christians, by whom he was looked upon to be *τις μυστα*, some great one, and no less than the Vicar and Vicegerent of the Holy Ghost; as others look on the Pope to be the Vicar and Vicegerent of Christ.

WHAT mainly and chiefly contributed to *Montanus's* having so many Followers and Admirers, was, that whereas all other Hereticks and Schismaticks, that went before him, maintained some blasphemous Tenets against the Person and Nature of Christ, and such as were shocking to all Christian Ears; *Montanus*, on the contrary, at his first setting up, either really was, or pretended to be, very orthodox in the Faith, and differed not from the Church as to any one Article of the Creed; he was constant in frequenting the publick Assemblies, receiving the Sacrament, and in performing all other Duties of Religion, in the Way and according to the Rules of the Church: But at the same time (like the Methodists) he and his Followers held private Meetings and Conventicles, where they exercised themselves with Prayer and Preaching, or, as they chose to call it, with Prophecying. Here he tied down his Disciples to much more strict and severe Rules, and Acts of Mortification, Self-denial, and Fasting, than the Church either required or imposed upon the Faithful: He formed them into several and distinct Societies, under certain Rules of Discipline of his own framing, in order to prepare them for the Reception of the Spirit.

MONTANUS had not long followed these Rules and purgative Preparations, when the Spirit that possessed him discovered itself by very extraordinary Effects; for it used to seize him at certain Times, and cast him into convulsive and preternatural Agitations and Shakings: During the Continuance of these parastatick Fits, he uttered a great many incoherent Things in a lofty and prophetick Stile; of all which he either really did (or pretended) not to remember one Word,

Word, when he recovered out of his Fits; but being taken down in Writing by some of the By-standers, they were published and handed about as the immediate Dictates and Oracles of the Holy Ghost, who was verily believed by his Followers and Disciples to speak thro' *Montanus*.

THE Subject-matter of these Prophecies was for the most part Denunciations of God's Judgments upon the Church for her Lukewarmness, and want of Zeal to promote the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, and for her opposition to that Dispensation which the Holy Ghost, by the Ministry of his Vicegerent *Montanus*, was about to establish. And although he pretended that these Judgments were immediately to fall upon her, yet it was observed that for forty Years, after the Commencement of these Prophecies, the Church never enjoyed more peaceable Times, nor was the State more free from either foreign or domestick Wars or Com-motions.

WHEN the Bishops and Governors of the Church (who at first winked at *Montanus* and his Followers, thinking them to be a well meaning, tho' mistaken People, that only aimed at the Reformation of Mens Manners) perceived to what extravagant Heights the Spirit of *Montanus* carried him, thought it was high time to look about them; they resolved therefore to bring this Spirit to a fair Trial, to examine its Pretences, that, if it was found to be from God, they might prepare themselves for the Reception of it, and submit themselves to its Directions; but if it was found to be otherwise, that they might arm the Faithful, and warn them against the Contagion and Infection of it.

ACCORDINGLY therefore they offered to 'adjure this Spirit in the Name of Christ, promising that if,
upon

¹ This was a common and ordinary Method of Trial, whilst the miraculous Powers of the Holy Ghost remained (as they did then) in the Church; but these miraculous Powers being long ago ceased, this way of trying Spirits is consequently superseded.

upon its being so adjured, it did not confess itself to be an evil Spirit, they would with all Chearfulness submit to it, and prepare themselves with all Alacrity for the Reception and Entertainment of that new, heavenly and paradisaical State which it promised to introduce.

BUT *Montanus* and his Followers (for he had his Favourers even among the Bishops) were too wise to put their Cause to this Issue; and therefore they utterly refused to submit to this way of Trial, looking upon it as a great Disparagement to, and Reflection upon the Paraclete or Holy Ghost, who, they affirmed, spake thro' *Montanus*; and when some * Catholick Bishops did, notwithstanding, attempt to adjure his Spirit, they were with Violence prevented from making the Attempt, having their Mouths stopped, and being forcibly driven out of the Assembly, where the Attempt was to be made, by the Friends of *Montanus*.

HEREUPON *Montanus* and all his Prophets, both Male and Female (for he had them of both Sexes) and all his other Associates, were solemnly excommunicated by the Catholick Bishops of *Pbrygia*; and the Montanists thereupon did excommunicate the Catholics, forming themselves into a new Church, and setting up Altar against Altar.

It is almost incredible to relate to what height of spiritual Madness and Profaneness these enthusiastick Visionaries were led by the Spirit that possessed them, after they were thus judicially given over to Satan, by the chief Governors of the Church: The learned Author already mentioned clearly proves, that this Spirit, after many various Changes and Revolutions, and appearing under several different Forms, ended at last in Mahometism in the East, and Popery in the West: And that we do, in some measure, feel the Effects
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* These were *Zoticus* of *Comanes*, and *Julianus* of *Apamen*, as *Euseb.* lib. 5. c. 16. from a Fragment of *Apollinaris*, Bishop of *Hieropolis*, informs us.

of it in the Reformed Churches, at this very Day.

As to the Church of *Rome*, it is too plain that most of the Doctrines peculiar to herself, are but so many Plants grafted upon Montanist (that is, upon enthusiastick) Stoicks, particularly the Doctrine of the Pope's Infallibility, which can never be accounted for upon any other Footing than that of immediate Inspiration from the Holy Ghost; and most of all her other absurd Tenets, such as ¹ Transubstantiation, Purgatory, &c. &c. however Scripture and Tradition are pretended for them, owe their Enthusiasm to some imaginary Visions and Revelations, which their pretended Saints, and Heads of religious Orders, either had, or pretended to have had, about them. This will appear to any one that reads St. *Gregory's* Dialogues, as to the Article of Purgatory, then first beginning to appear in the Western Church, after its being discarded by the *Grecian* and Eastern Churches; and is further plain from the Doctrine of the immaculate Conception of the blessed Virgin *Mary*, which owes its first Rise to the Visions and Revelations of St. *Bridget*; but unfortunately for her, and her Doctrine too, St. *Catharine* of *Siena* had her Visions and Revelations to the contrary: So the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is still, as it ever has been, contested between the Franciscans and Jesuits, who stand up for the Revelation of St. *Bridget*, on the one Hand, and the whole Body of the Dominicans, who stand up as vigorously for the Revelations of St. *Catharine*, a professed Virgin of their own Order, on the other Hand.

NOR

¹ Some are of Opinion, that the Montanists were the first Broachers of Transubstantiation, being confidently accused by some of the Antients, of kneading the Seed of one of their *Pneumatici*, or spiritual Men, with the Bread of their profane Mysteries, in order to make it literally the Body of a Man.

NOR has the Reformed Church been free from the Infection of this Spirit of Enthusiasm: In the great Rebellion of 1641, there was such a Spirit of Enthusiasm and Fanaticism let loose upon these Nations, as ended at last in the total Overthrow of our excellent Constitution both in Church and State; the Pulpits were left open to every bold Intruder (even to the common Foot Soldiers) who fancied himself a gifted Person, or inspired by the Holy Ghost; the Consequence of which was such an Inundation of vile Heresies, and monstrous Opinions in Religion, as if all the Gates of Hell had been opened and let loose upon the Nations, which at that time seemed to be as productive of Monsters in Religion, as ever *Afric* was of Monsters in Nature. It was then that the Names of Quakers, Muggletonians, Seekers, Ranters, &c. &c. were first heard of in these Churches and Nations; and all this owing to a blasphemous Pretence to the Spirit, and a Violation of all Rules and Orders, every one, without any regular Call, or Examination from the Governors of the Church, being, without Check or Controul, suffered to exercise their Gifts, and deceive the People.

NOR can we say that we are yet intirely free from the mischievous Consequences of this Pretence to the Spirit, and the sacrilegious and schismatical Attempts of the Laity, who assume to themselves a Liberty of preaching, without any Call from God or Man. This is too plain from the Principles of the Methodists, who set up at first with the very same Pretences that *Montanus* and his Followers did: They, as well as he, accuse the Bishops and Clergy for Negligence and Carelessness in the discharge of their Duty, and Remissness in Discipline: They charge them with want of Zeal for the Spirit and Life of Christianity, and with living mere animal Lives, quite void of the Spirit; and though they still keep fair with the Church, and do not openly profess to differ with her in Doctrine,

trine, or in any Article of the Creed, and that they frequent her Assemblies, &c. yet they, like the Montanists, have their private Assemblies and Conventicles; they form themselves into several Bands or Societies, under Rules of Discipline of their own framing, in direct Opposition to the chief Governors of the Church; they, like *Montanus*, pretend to a Spirit of immediate Inspiration and Revelation, and they permit and allow any Layman, who fancies himself a gifted Person, to be a publick Preacher.

IN a Word, there seems to be a very great Affinity between the Spirit of Montanism, at its first Appearance, and the Spirit of Methodism; they both went upon the same Plan, and with the same View and Design, of raising the Christian Religion to a greater height of Perfection and Spirituality than it was before; and both oblige their Disciples to much more frequent and severe Acts of Mortification, Fasting, and Self-denial, than the Catholick Church ever thought fit or necessary to oblige her Sons to, or to require from them: So that Methodism, in reality, is no other than Montanism revived, under another Form and another Name; the Scene, it is true, is shifted, and the Actors are changed, but the same Drama is still carried on, and the same Plot continued.

THERE seems but one Circumstance wanting to render the Parallel between them complete, and that is, the parastatick Fits, and preternatural Agitations and Shakings, into which *Montanus* and his Followers used to fall: But in this also the Methodists may be looked upon as moved by the same Spirit that *Montanus* was acted by; for Numbers of them, when they receive what they call THE FAITH, ^m fall flat on the Ground, and continue in a Trance for some time; others roar and groan frightfully, and are almost shaken to Pieces; others are seized with an immoderate

^m The Reader who will take the Pains to peruse Mr. *Wesley's* Diaries, will meet with Instances to this purpose in abundance.

rate Fit of Laughter, which they cannot put a stop to, besides many other Symptoms of their being possessed with some extraordinary Spirit; but whether a good or evil one, let the World judge, from the violent, uncouth, and ridiculous Effects which it has upon them, which by no means resemble the mild and gentle Influences and Operations of the Spirit of God.

THAT the Methodists pretend to immediate Revelation, as much as ever the Montanists did, I partly know from very good Information; being once told by a Member of that Society (whom I knew to be a Man of a competent Share of Learning, and of a sober Understanding, but who is since come to a better Mind, and upon discovery of their Hypocrisy has quitted them) that he believed a certain Lay-preacher among them to be as much, and as highly inspired, as ever the Apostle St. *Paul* was; and that Preacher himself has been frequently heard to say, that he believed himself as righteous and as free from Sin as ever Jesus Christ was; for that it was impossible he could sin, because the Spirit of God dwelt bodily in him. What the End and Effect of such blasphemous Pretences as these may in time come to, God only knows, and we can only guess at. But if we may conclude that the same Causes will produce the same Effects (and sure there is nothing unreasonable or uncharitable in the Conclusion) we may venture to foretel, that they will, either sooner or later, produce as great Mischiefs to Christianity in general, and the Reformation in particular, as ever the Spirit of *Montanus* did to the former.

SINCE the Spirit that possessed that Arch-Heretick, never carried him to a greater or higher pitch of Blasphemy, than that which this Methodist Lay-preacher was guilty of, and how many more among them, over the three Nations, already have, or in time may set up for the same, or some other equally dangerous and blasphemous Pretence, no Man can tell. But

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the plainest Mark of the Falshood of the Spirit of these enthusiastick Sectaries, in my Opinion, is their making the way to Heaven much more narrow and difficult than either Jesus Christ or his Apostles have made it, and requiring such Degrees of Perfection as are not in the Power of Human Nature, in its present State of Infirmary, to attain to; the natural Consequence of which is, that such as will find themselves unable to arrive at such Perfection, may (it is much to be feared) grow desperate, and give themselves up to all manner of Licentiousness; and such as through a heated and enthusiastick Imagination, fancy that they either actually do, or can attain to such Perfection, will be filled with all manner of spiritual Pride, Blasphemy, and Arrogance, together with Contempt of, and uncharitable Censures on, their Brethren, who do not, or indeed cannot, come up to their fancied Degree of Innocence or Perfection.

I FIND it affirmed in some of their printed Pamphlets, " that a Man may do a great deal of Good, " and no manner of Harm, and may be constant " and regular in performing all the Duties of publick " and private Worship, &c. but that all this shall avail " him nothing towards attaining Salvation, unless he " attains to that paradisaical State of Innocence in " which *Adam* was created, and in which he conti- " nued till his Fall, and which the good Angels have " continued in since their Creation ;" and all this endeavoured to be proved from the Petition in the Lord's Prayer, wherein we are directed to pray that the Will of God may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven; for if Christ, say they, did not know that this was both possible and necessary to be done, he would never direct us to pray for it. If this be really our Case, we may well cry out with the Disciples of our Lord, " upon another Occasion, *Who then can be saved ?*

▪ See Mr. *Wesley's* serious Answer to Dr. *Trapp*, *passim*, but especially pag. 39, 40.

saved? And little Comfort can we have in those gracious Expressions of his, when he assures us, that his *Yoke is easy*, and that his *Burthen is light*; for if this Doctrine be true, his Yoke (especially in the present State and Condition of our corrupted Nature) is most uneasy, and his Burthen is intolerable.

BUT be not deceived, my Brethren, for this is not the Gospel of Christ, but a Gospel of their own framing and inventing: The Gospel of Christ requires no more from us than *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, together with a sincere Endeavour of Obedience to all his Commandments; which Endeavour, though it should (as it necessarily must whilst we are in the Body) be attended with many Frailties, Weaknesses, and Infirmities, yet God, for the sake of Christ's perfect and sinless Obedience, and the Merits of his all-sufficient Death and Passion, promises to accept of, instead of that sinless and perfect Obedience, which was required from *Adam* by the Covenant of Works: For we are not now under the Law, or Covenant of Works, but under Grace, or the Covenant of Mercy, which makes all due Allowance for the Frailties of our corrupted Nature, that are not wilful, and obstinately continued in, without Repentance, on account of the Death and Passion of our blessed Saviour: Whereas if the Doctrine of these Enthusiasts be true, and that we are still tied down to the first Covenant made with *Adam*, all Difference between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace is intirely taken away: And the whole Mystery and Oeconomy of the Gospel Dispensation is thereby overturned from the very Foundation; for Christ undertook the Oeconomy of our Redemption, in order to satisfy the Justice of his Father for our Sins, and to perform that perfect and sinless Obedience in his own Person which was required from *Adam*, and in him from us, and which we, in the State of our fallen and corrupt Nature, were not able to perform:

And we by a firm and lively Faith, relying intirely and casting ourselves wholly upon this sinless and perfect Obedience of Christ, and the all-sufficient Merits of his Death and Passion, together with hearty Repentance for all our Sins, Ignorances, and Infirmities, and a sincere (though imperfect) Obedience, are, according to the Terms of the Gospel, and the Covenant of Grace and Mercy, intitled to Salvation.

IN a Word, this Doctrine is directly contrary to the exprefs Words of St. *John*, * who affirms, that *if we should fancy or say that we have no Sin, we only miserably deceive ourselves, and plainly discover that the Truth is not us; but if we humbly confess and acknowledge our Sins, (in which Repentance for them is implied) then God is faithful and just, to all his Promises in Christ, and will undoubtedly forgive us our Sins, and cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.*

IN which Words the Apostle clearly argues, that though we cannot with Truth say that we have no Sin, and consequently cannot with Truth affirm that we have attained to the paradisaical State of *Adam's* Innocence before his Fall, yet we may, notwithstanding this, still expect Salvation, upon a sincere Repentance, and humble Confession and Acknowledgment of our Sins.

As to their Argument from the Petition in the Lord's Prayer, wherein we are directed to pray that the Will of God may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven: We are to observe, that Particles of Parity or Comparison in Scripture, do not always or necessarily infer or imply a mathematical Proportion or Equality, but sometimes, and for the most part, they imply no more than a moral kind of Resemblance, due regard had to the different Natures, Powers, and Circumstances of the Things or Persons compared. Thus, for instance, our Saviour desires us to be merciful, [¶] as our

° 1 John viii. 9.

¶ Matt. v. 48.

our heavenly Father is merciful ; to be perfect, as he is perfect.

Now I will suppose (and as the World goes it is a bold Supposition) that no Man can be so religiously mad or crazy, as to fancy himself capable of equalling God, either in Mercy or any other Perfection, in a mathematical Proportion ; and therefore the Design of these and the like Precepts and Exhortations, is no more than to incite us to imitate those divine Graces and Perfections, so far as is consistent with the different Natures of God and Man.

IN like manner, when our Lord directs us to pray that the Will of God may be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven ; this is by no means to be understood, of a mathematical Proportion or Equality, but of a moral Resemblance, due regard had to the Difference between the Nature and Circumstances of Men and Angels : For the Angels are pure, and immaterial Spirits, no way clogged or encumbered with Flesh and Blood, and consequently not subject to any irregular Motions or Appetites from within ; and they stand continually in the Presence of God (where he appears more immediately in the Brightness of his divine Majesty and Glory) in a confirmed and irreverfible state of Grace and Glory.

BUT Man is immersed in, and joined to, mortal and frail Flesh and Blood, as an essential Part of his Composition, and on that account subject to many irregular Passions and Appetites from within, besides the many Temptations he is constantly exposed to from without, by the Devil and the World : Nor is he, as yet, arrived to a confirmed and irreverfible State of either Grace or Glory ; it is therefore impossible, morally speaking, that he can perform the Will of God on Earth, in a mathematical Proportion, as it is performed by the Angels in Heaven, tho' he may come as near it as their different Natures, Abilities, and Circumstances will allow ; and that is, most certainly,

tainly, all that is designed by the Petition in the Lord's Prayer.

AND now, my Brethren, what is the Result of this whole Discourse? Why here it is in short, namely, that we be all and each of us, in our several Stations and Degrees, very careful and cautious, how we give Credit to every new and unusual Spirit or Doctrine, that would endeavour to obtrude itself upon us for the Spirit of God, without a strict Trial and Examination, by the foregoing or some other equivalent Rules, how fair and specious soever the outward Appearance or Pretence may be; because the greater and more specious the outward Appearance or Pretence, the greater is the Danger of being deceived: That we be not tossed about with every vain Blast of Doctrine, having itching Ears, fond of Novelties and new-fangled Customs and Practices; but that, to the contrary, we steddily adhere to the plain, sober, and rational Precepts of Religion and Morality; and never give Ear to the vain and fantastical Flights of crazy-pated Enthusiasts.

LET us love God above and before all Things, and make the Love of ourselves the Rule of our Love to our Neighbour, so as never to do that to another, which we would not have another do to ourselves, in equal Circumstances. Let us be constant in performing all the Duties of publick and private Worship, sincerely endeavouring to mortify all our evil and corrupt Affections, and daily proceeding in all Virtue and Godliness of living; humbly and with a lively Faith relying on the Mercy of God, in and for the Sake of Christ Jesus our Lord, for the Pardon of our unavoidable Failings, Weaknesses, and Imperfections, upon our sincere Repentance. In a Word, let us visit the fatherless Children and Widows, and keep ourselves (as far as may be) unspotted from the World. This is the true, the ancient, and Catholick Religion of Christ: This is, as St. James calls it, *pure and undefiled*

undefiled Religion before God and the Father. And in order to be truly instructed in, and sufficiently exhorted to the Practice of this Religion, we need not go farther than the legal Assemblies of our own Church; and have no manner of Occasion to frequent unlawful and unwarrantable Conventicles, or give Ear to schismatical, unauthorised, illegal Lay-preachers, to the great Scandal of the true reformed Protestant Religion, to the manifest exposing of it to the Scorn and Reproach of its common and inveterate Enemies the Papists, to the distracting of the Minds of the People, and giving Occasion of Offence to Men of weak Minds and Capacities; and finally, to the great Increase of Uncharitableness, and mutual Animosities.

BUT above all, that we seriously apply ourselves to a thorough Reformation and Amendment of our Lives and Conversations, so shall we (besides the great Comfort and inestimable Advantage of it to ourselves) take from these proud-conceited Pharisees, all Occasion and Pretence of glorying and boasting against us, and leave them no manner of Plea or Excuse for themselves. There is nothing they glory and boast more in, than their own pretended outward Holiness and Righteousness, and the loose and profligate Behaviour of too many among us. In this Vein they are immoderately proud and boasting, most of their Discourses being stuffed with Praises and Panegyrics on their own Righteousness and Holiness, which, by the way, is another shrewd Sign of the Falseness of their Spirit; for every Spirit that is of God is humble, meek, and lowly in its own Eyes, does not vaunt itself, neither is it puffed up, but on all Occasions both thinks and speaks more meanly of itself than of others.

IF we could be persuaded to be so just to ourselves, as to deprive them of this their Matter and Pretence of boasting against us, by a thorough Reformation, we should soon see them dwindle into nothing as a

Society, and their Craft and Hypocrisy laid open to the View of the World.

As to their frequent and long Prayers, we know that the Scribes and Pharisees, among the *Jews*, far exceeded them both in the Number, Length, and Frequency of their Prayers; and yet our Saviour pronounced a Woe against them on this very Account; *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye make long Prayers, and for a Pretence devour Widows Houses*: And whether these our modern Scribes and Pharisees do not as cruel and hard-hearted Things to their Neighbours, when they can find an Advantage against them, I leave to God and their own Consciences to determine. I speak as to wise Men, consider ye what I say; and may the great God of Heaven and Earth give both you and myself a right and sober Judgment in all Things, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, three most glorious Persons, and one infinite, eternal, and incomprehensible Deity, be all Honour and Glory, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and thro' all Ages, World without End. *Amen.*

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LETTERS

Which passed between the

Rev. Mr. JOHN WESLY,

AND THE


AUTHOR.



LETTER I.

To Mr. JOHN WESLY.

REV. SIR,


 RECEIVED the Favour of your printed Discourse upon *Catholick Spirit* by Mr. *William Rutledge*, and should only thank you for the same, and not trouble either you or myself with this Address, were it not that I am somewhat suspicious, that you had a farther and more particular View, than merely making a Present, in presenting me with that Discourse rather than any other of your printed Pamphlets or Sermons.

I SHALL very candidly acquaint you with the Grounds of my Suspicion : Some time ago I took Occasion to preach to the Flock then (in the Absence of .the

the Rector) under my Care, upon 1 *John* iv. 1. one Mr. *Langston*, a Lay-preacher of your Society, or (as I remember when you preached here you called it) of your Little Church, and some other Members of your Society being present, my Text naturally led me to lay down some Rules for the Trial of Spirits; and among others I insisted on this, that any Person who pretended to an extraordinary and immediate Spirit of Inspiration or Revelation, without proving his Pretensions by such Credentials, as the Prophets in the Old, or the Apostles and other inspired Persons in the New Testament, proved their Pretensions by, that is, by real and undoubted Miracles, might justly be deemed either a deluded Enthusiast, or an arrant Cheat and Impostor.

Mr. *Langston*, I suppose, was offended at this and some other Parts of the Discourse, imagining (and I confess he was not out in his Imagination) that it concerned, or was particularly levelled at himself: Whereupon (thinking, I suppose, to engage me in a Controversy with him) he wrote me a Letter, of which I did not think it worth my while to take any Notice; because, however that venerable Preacher may, either in his own, or the Opinion of others, be inspired, yet when he wrote that Letter, either he was not under the Influences of the Spirit, or the Spirit forgot to direct him to write common Sense, Orthography, or *English*. Now I think it not unlikely that Mr. *Langston*, since your Arrival, may have acquainted you with this Affair, and that your sending me your Discourse upon *Catholic Spirit* (wherein you endeavour to prove, that Christians ought not to inquire into each others Opinions in Religion, or their different Modes of Worship) was a genteel and tacit way of reproving me, for making any Inquiry into the religious Principles of the Methodists, for which I am very far from finding any Fault with you, as I think it incumbent on every Christian, if he believes his Brother

ther to be in an Error, to endeavour, as far as he is able, or has an Opportunity, to convince him of his Error, in order to his recanting, or forsaking of it.

HAVING thus candidly and freely acquainted you with the Grounds of my Suspicion, I shall now proceed, with the same Freedom and Candour, to acquaint you with the Motives that induced me to preach that Sermon, and to give you my Opinion upon such Parts of your Discourse upon *Catbolick Spirit*, as I conceive were designed by you as a Reproof of what I therein spoke against some of your Principles as a Methodist.

IN several Conversations which I have at several Times had with some Members of your Society, I found them always strenuously insisting upon the extraordinary and immediate Inspirations of the Holy Ghost, without being ever able to convince them of the Difference between the extraordinary and immediate, and the ordinary and mediate Influences of that blessed Spirit: And particularly, discoursing at a certain Time with one Mr. *B—m*, a Member of your Society, he did not scruple to affirm, that he verily believed, the aforesaid *L—n* was as much inspired as ever the great Apostle *St. Paul* was; and I was credibly informed by some, who went out of Curiosity to hear the same *L—n* preach in this Town, (and by others, who often heard him at other Times, and in other Places, express the same) that he affirmed himself to be as righteous and as free from Sin as ever *Jesus Christ* was, and that it was impossible he could commit any Sin, because the Spirit of God dwelt bodily in him. These, Sir, I did, and still do, conceive to have been blasphemous Expressions, for which, if he was guilty, he deserved to be punished with the utmost Rigour of Law: For I challenge Antichrist himself, whoever he be, or whensoever he shall appear, to be guilty of more staring and capital Blasphemy,

phemy, than equalling himself with the Son of God for Righteousness, and Freedom from Sin.

BEING therefore informed that these blasphemous Words were spoke in the hearing of some of the Flock, that, in the Absence of the Rector of the Parish, were under my Care, I thought I could not discharge my Duty to the Flock, nor answer the Trust reposed in me by their Rector, without warning them to be cautious how they gave Credit to such a lying deceitful Spirit, as Mr. *L*—*n* must needs have been possessed with, how great and specious soever its outward Appearance of Piety and Devotion might be; for I conceived, that a Tree which produced such blasphemous Fruit could never be of God's planting.

I COME now to give you my Opinion of your Discourse upon *Catholick Spirit*, which I have read more than once with all the Impartiality and Attention I was Master of; and although I have no Exception to your earnest Recommendation of a Catholick Spirit of Love among Christians; yet give me Leave, Sir, without Offence, to affirm, that some Parts of it seem to me to be very unwarrantable, and absolutely inconsistent with that very Catholick Spirit of Love which you so earnestly, so pathetically, and indeed so piously recommend.

YOUR Text is taken from 2 *Kings* x. 15. and consists of *Jebu's* Question to *Jebonadab*, *Is your Heart right, as my Heart with thy Heart?* &c. And your first Remark upon your Text is, that ¹ *Jebu* makes no Inquiry into *Jebonadab's* Opinions, though he held some that were uncommon, and peculiar to himself: And it does not appear, you say, that *Jebu* concerned himself at all about these Things, but suffered *Jebonadab* to abound in his own Sense; and neither of them appears to have given the other the least Disturbance concerning each other's Opinions.

YOUR

YOUR second Observation, drawn from your Text, is, that there is no Inquiry made into *Jehonadab's* Mode or Manner of Worship; though it is highly probable, you say, there was a wide Difference between them in this Respect; *Jehonadab*, in all Probability, worshipping at *Jerusalem*, and *Jebu* worshipping at *Dan* and *Bethel*, &c.

FROM these Observations, I do suppose that your Design was to infer, that neither ought Christians (any more than *Jebu* did) to make any Inquiry into each others religious Opinions, or different Modes of Worship, but that every one should be suffered to abound in his own Sense, and to worship God in his own way; and that your presenting me with this Discourse was with a Design to let me know, that I had no Right to inquire into the religious Principles of the Methodists, but should have permitted them to abound in their own Sense, without giving them any Disturbance about it.

THAT this was your Design in that Discourse, and that it was probably on this Account alone that you made me a Present of that Discourse, rather than any other of your printed Sermons or Pamphlets, seems pretty evident from what you farther advance, and by the Instances you produce; for upon these Words of your Text, *If it be, give me your Hand*, you discourse thus, “ I do not mean (say you) be
“ of my Opinion, you need not, &c. keep your
“ own Opinion and I will keep mine, and that as
“ steadily as ever; you need not even desire to come
“ over to me, I do not desire to dispute about these
“ Things, nor to hear one Word about them, &c.
“ Let all Opinions alone on *one Side and the other.*”

AND as to the Difference between the Church and the Presbyterians about Church Government, and the Quakers about Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the Anabaptists about Infant Baptism, of all these Differences

Differences you make nothing at all; you have no Desire, you say, to dispute with any of them, no not for a single Moment; and you would have all these small Matters, for so you are pleased to call them, laid aside, and never come in sight.

THAT such Propositions as these should be advanced by a Clergyman of the Church of *England*, who bound himself to God and the Church, at his Ordination, under the most solemn Vows and Obligations, to be always ready, with all Diligence, to banish and drive away all strange and erroneous Doctrines and Opinions from his Flock, is to me very amazing; and how he can answer or fulfil these Obligations, without enquiring into, or examining the Opinions of all that differ from the Opinions and Mode of Worship established in that Church wherein he was ordained, and entrusted with the Cure of Souls, is past my Capacity to comprehend. But to return to your Discourse upon *Catholick Spirit*.

I HUMBLY conceive, that your Text affords no manner of Countenance or Foundation, for either of the Observations which you draw from it: For tho' it be not expressly mentioned in the Text, that *Jebu* enquired into *Jebonadab's* Opinions, yet it may be implied in the Question which he proposed to him, *Is thy Heart right?* &c. which Question may well bear this Sense, 'Are you of the same religious Principles with me?' But suppose it was neither expressed nor implied (as indeed I am of Opinion it was neither the one or the other, for it was the least of *Jebu's* Concern to trouble his Head about *Jebonadab's* religious Sentiments, or his manner of Worship, being a mere Politician and Latitudinarian, with respect to these Things) suppose all this, I say, how does it follow that Christians ought not to enquire into each others religious Sentiments? Or who made the Principles, the Actions, or Conduct of *Jebu* a Rule for Christians to walk by? For although God made Use of him as
an

an Instrument to punish the House of *Abab*, and to destroy the Worshippers of *Baal* out of *Israel*, yet he was, in all other Respects, a very bad Man; and he that will undertake to justify all his Actions and Proceedings, will find it a very hard Task to reconcile most of them to the strict Rules of Christian Morality.

THE plain Meaning therefore, of *Jebu's* Question to *Jebonadab*, seems to me to be no more than this: *Jebu*, according to his usual Custom, was driving furiously in his Chariot towards *Samaria*, in order to destroy all that yet remained of the Family of *Abab*, and by an hypocritical Scheme, not to be justified by the Principles of Christian Morality, to bring all the Worshippers of *Baal* to one Place, in order to destroy them.

IN his way he meets with *Jebonadab* the Son of *Rechab*, and being desirous to know his Opinion, and to have his Approbation of what he had hitherto done, and was farther resolved to do, he proposes the Question to him which you have chose for your Text, *Is thy Heart right?* &c. That is, do you, in your Opinion and Judgment, approve of and consent to what I have hitherto done, and am still resolved, and now actually going to do, towards destroying the idolatrous House of *Abab*, according to the Word of *Elijah* the Man of God; and upon *Jebonadab's* answering in the Affirmative, he gives him his Hand, takes him up into his Chariot, desiring him to come and be an Eye-witness of his Zeal for the Lord.

BUT though Zeal for the Lord was the outward Pretence, yet in Reality *Jebu's* principal View and Design was, to secure the Crown the more effectually to his own Family, by an entire Eradication of the Posterity of *Abab*, and by rooting out and destroying all the Worshippers of *Baal*, who (if not out of Gratitude, yet upon a Principle of Self-interest) must have been firmly attached to the Royal Family of *Abab*, their great Patron and Supporter.

THAT

THAT this was really the Case with *Jebu*, seems very plain, from his continuing still in the Sin of *Jeroboam* the Son of *Nebat*, notwithstanding all his boasted Zeal for the Lord. This being all that can possibly be gathered from *Jebu's* Question to *Jehonadab*, I know no Rule of Logick that can from thence infer, that Christians ought not to enquire into each other's religious Principles, or their different Modes and Forms of Worship.

IN a Word, Sir, your Propositions and Observations receive no more Countenance from, and have no more Foundation in your Text, than in the first Chapter of *Genesis*.

THAT there are and will be Differences in Religion, and consequently in Modes of Worship, to the End of the World, is very probable; and that every one must, or ought to be, persuaded in his own Mind, and act and walk according to the Light which he has; and that no Creature has Power to force or constrain another to walk by his Rule, all this I acknowledge (as you observe) to be very true. But then, Sir, tho' we may not force or constrain, may we not persuade, advise, and exhort our Brother to forsake an erroneous or an evil way of thinking or believing? And if he will not be persuaded to do so, may we not, (and is it not our indispensable Duty to) reject such an one, that is, have no Fellowship with him in either? May we not, after private Admonition, if he will not be reformed thereby, delate ^u such an one to the Church, according to our Saviour's own Directions; and if he will not hear, that is, be advised by the Church, but will still continue obstinate and incorrigible, are we not warranted, by the express Words of our Lord, to look upon him, after he is duly excommunicated, according to the Rules of the Gospel, as no better than an Heathen or a Publican, that is, the worst of Sinners?

DORS

^u Pag. 11.

^u Matth. xviii. 17.

DOES not St. *Paul* desire *Titus* ^w to reject, that is, to excommunicate a Man that is an Heretick, because such an one is perverted, and condemned of himself; not that no Man is an Heretick but he that acts against Conscience; (as some have strangely imagined) for then neither *Titus* nor any other could know who was, or who was not an Heretick; because no Man could tell whether he acted against Conscience or not, and all Hereticks would be Hypocrites, which is by no Means supposeable; for an Heretick may be very sincere, and take his heretical Opinion for catholick Truth. But the Meaning ^x of being condemned of himself is, that by his obstinate and wilful Adherence to his false Opinion, he brings the Censure of the Church upon himself, and so consequently condemns himself before the actual Denunciation of the Censures upon him.

You acknowledge ^y the Government of the Church by Bishops, as an Order superior to Presbyters, to be scriptural and apostolical; but if another thinks the Presbyterian or Independant Form to be better, you advise him to think so still, and you will, you say, neither desire nor endeavour to bring him to your own way of thinking; and you expressly allow the Quakers to reject Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and you desire to have no Dispute with them about such Trifles, and that the Questions about them may NEVER come in Sight.

AND do you, Sir, in good earnest think it a Matter indifferent, whether the Church be under a Form of Government of divine (for so the episcopal Form must be, if it be, as you acknowledge, both scriptural and apostolical) or under an human Form, never heard of in the Church of God before the Days of *John Calvin*? Are Heresies and Schisms, which St. *Paul* ^z reckons among the Works of the Flesh, Sins

^w Tit. iii. 10. ^x See Dr. *Hammond* on the Text. ^y Pag. 17.
^z Gal. v. 20.

of so flight and trivial a Nature, that you will have no Dispute with any one about them? And will you not endeavour to rescue your Brother from such capital Sins, which, if we may believe St. *Paul*, shut the Gates of Heaven against Men, as effectually as Murder or Adultery? How then is this any way consistent with that catholick Spirit of Love, which in your Sermon you do so earnestly recommend?

ALL Errors or Deviations from the Truth are more or less sinful, in Proportion to the Importance of the Truth that is deviated from, or the Vincibleness or Invincibleness of the Ignorance from whence such Error or Deviation proceeds. And since of two contradictory Opinions, one must of Necessity be true and the other false, and that which ever of the two a Man holds or maintains, he must hold it as true, for no Man can hold or maintain a false Opinion *sub modo*, that is, believing it to be false, he must consequently believe the contradictory Opinion, to that which he holds, to be false; and can he, consistently with that Love which he ought to have for his Brother, suffer Sin upon him, without endeavouring to reform him, according to the best of his Power, and the Opportunity which God shall afford him?

If, for Instance, I believe Baptism and the Lord's Supper to be standing Ordinances of the Gospel, and necessary Means (I mean in the ordinary way) of Salvation, and consequently of perpetual Obligation, and that a Quaker (as he actually does) denies all this, and consequently rejects and disuses these Ordinances, must I not believe this to be a very great Sin in him, proportionably to the Vincibleness or Invincibleness of his Ignorance; and shall I desire him to lay aside all Questions about them? How then can I possibly love him, or wish well to his Soul, if I do not endeavour to convince him of his Error, and the sinfulness of it, in order to his renouncing and forsaking of it? And how can

can I do this, without arguing against his Error, and giving him some Disturbance about it?

THIS palpable Indifference of yours, as to opposite Opinions in Religion, is, I suppose, the Result and Effect of that Maxim which you and your Brother laid down to yourselves, when ye first undertook the Propagation of Methodism in *London*; for among the four Maxims, which, in your *Plain Account of the People called Methodists*, pag. 4. you say, ye laid down to yourselves as a Rule, which you intended to go by, the very first is, that Orthodoxy, or right Opinions, is but a very slender Part of Religion at best, if it may be allowed to be any Part at all of it.

I AM now, Sir, convinced of the Truth of what I hitherto only suspected, namely, that notwithstanding all its outward Show of Piety and Devotion, there was some hidden Mystery, very dangerous to Religion, at the Bottom of Methodism: For I am really of Opinion, there hardly can be a more dangerous Maxim than that which you and your Brother laid down to yourselves, as a Rule for the Propagation of it; for, according to this blessed Maxim, it is but a very slender, if it be any Part at all of Religion, to have a right Opinion of the Divinity and Eternity of the Son of God, against *Arrius*; of the Unity of his Person, against *Nestorius*; or the Distinction of his two Natures, the human and divine, against *Eutyches*: And it must be a Matter of very little Importance to Religion, which Side of the Question one holds, in any or all the above Cases, if it be true, that Orthodoxy, or true Opinions be at the very best but a slender, if it may be allowed to be any, Part at all of Religion.

IN one Word, Sir, this Maxim, in my Opinion, strikes at the Root of all Religion and of Faith; it makes it a Matter quite indifferent, what Opinion a Man holds concerning any one Article of the Creed,

which is only a right way of believing Facts plainly revealed in Scripture: It makes St. Paul's Charge to *Timothy*, ^a to *bold fast the Form of sound Words*, which he had heard from him, of little or no Consequence; and makes the Advice of St *Jude*, ^b to *contend earnestly for the Faith that was once delivered to the Saints*, very impertinent; and, to conclude all, it opens a wide Gap to that Latitudinarianism and Indifference, as to Points of Speculation, which you yourself, in the Close of your Discourse upon *Catbolick Spirit*, (how consistently with this Maxim let the World judge) very justly and truly call the Curse of Heaven, and the Spawn of Hell.

I am, Sir, &c.

J. C.



L E T T E R II.

Mr. W E S L Y'S Answer.

Rev. Sir,

I AM obliged to you for the Openness and Candour with which you write, and will endeavour to follow the Pattern which you have set me.

I DID not know of *John Langston's* Affair, till you gave me an Account of it: He is no Preacher allowed of by me; I do not believe that ever God called him to it; neither do I approve his Conduct with regard to you; I fear he is, or at least was, a real Enthusiast: The same Character, I fear, may be justly given to poor Mr. B——m. I sent you that Sermon with no particular View, but as a Testimony of Love to a Fellow Labourer in the Gospel.

FROM

^a 2 Tim. i. 13.

^b Jude, ver. 3.

FROM the Text of that Sermon I do not infer, that Christians should not inquire into each others Opinions: Indeed from the Text I infer nothing; I use it to illustrate, not to prove. I am very sensible *Jebu* had more Regard to State Policy than to Religion, p. 15. and have no Objection to the very fair Explication you have made of his Words: Accordingly I say, p. 13. I do not mean what *Jebu* implied therein, but what a Follower of Christ should understand by it, when he proposes it to any of his Brethren; of these only I speak. My general Proposition, you may please to remember, was this, p. 5. "All the Children of God may unite in Love, notwithstanding their Differences in Opinion, or Modes of Worship." From this Persuasion, when I meet with any, whom I have Reason to believe to be Children of God, I do not ask of him (never at our first Meeting, seldom till we are better acquainted) Do you agree with me in Opinion or Modes of Worship, particularly with regard to Church Government, Baptism and the Lord's Supper? I let these stand by, till we begin to know and confirm our Love to each other; then may come a more convenient Season for Controversy: My only Question at present is, *Is thy Heart right with my Heart?* &c.

AT present, I say, keep your own Opinion, p. 13. I mine; I do not desire you to dispute these Points; whether we shall dispute them hereafter, is another Question; perhaps we may, perhaps we may not; this will depend on a great Variety of Circumstances, particularly on a Probability of Success; for I am determined never to dispute at all, if I have no Hopes of convincing my Opponent.

As to my own Judgment, I still believe the episcopal Form of Church Government to be both scriptural and apostolical, I mean, well agreeing with the Practice and Writings of the Apostles; but that it is prescribed in Scripture I do not believe: This Opin-

nion, which I once heartily espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of, ever since I read Dr. *Stillingfleet's Irenicum*; I think he has unanswerably proved, that neither Christ or his Apostles prescribed any particular Form of Church Government, and that the Plea for the Divine Right of Episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive Church.

BUT were it otherwise, I would still call these smaller Matters than the Love of God and Mankind, p. 18. And could any Man answer these Questions, Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God over all, blessed for evermore? (which indeed no Arrian, Semi-Arrian, or Socinian can do) Is God the Center of thy Soul? Art thou more afraid of offending God than of Death or Hell? p. 15. (which no wicked Man can possibly do, none that is not a real Child of God) if, I say, any Man could answer these Questions in the Affirmative, I would gladly give him my Hand.

THIS is certainly a Principle held by those that are in Derision called Methodists, and to whom a Popish Priest in *Dublin* gave the still more unmeaning Title of *Swaddlers*; they all desire to be of a catholic Spirit, meaning thereby, not an Indifference to all Opinions, not an Indifference as to Modes of Worship, this they know to be quite another Thing; Love, they judge, gives a Title this Character, catholic Love is catholic Spirit, p. 25.

As to Heresy and Schism, I cannot find one Text in Scripture where they are taken in the modern Sense. I remember no one Scripture where Heresy signifies Error in Opinion, whether fundamental or not; nor any where Schism signifies Separation from the Church, either with or without Cause. I wish, Sir, you would re-consider this Point, and review the Scriptures where these Terms occur.

BUT I would take some Pains to recover a Man from Error, and reconcile him to our Church, I mean the Church of *England*, from which I do not separate yet,

yet, and probably never shall: The little Church, in the vulgar Sense, which I occasionally mentioned at *Hollymount*, is that wherein I read Prayers, preach, and administer the Sacrament, every *Sunday* when I am in *London*.

BUT I would take much more Pains to recover a Man from Sin; a Man who lives and dies in Error, or in Dissent from our Church, may yet be saved; but a Man who lives and dies in Sin must perish. Oh! Sir, let us lend our main Force against this, against all Sin, both in ourselves and those that hear us. I would to God we could all agree in Opinion and outward Worship; but if that cannot be, may we not agree in Holiness? May we not all agree in being holy, as he that has called us is holy, in Heart and Conversation. This is the great Desire of,

Reverend Sir,

Your, &c.

J. W.

P. S. Perhaps I have not spoke distinctly enough on one Point. Orthodoxy, I say, or right Opinion, is but a slender Part of Religion at best, and sometimes no Part at all; I mean, if a Man be a Child of God, holy in Heart and Life, his right Opinions are but the smallest Part of his Religion: If a Man be a Child of the Devil, his right Opinions are no Part of Religion, they cannot be; for he that does the Works of the Devil has no Religion at all.

LETTER III.

A Second Letter to Mr. WESLEY.

Rev. Sir,

I RECEIVED your Letter, dated at *Castlebar* the 3d instant, and am very glad to find you do not approve of Mr. *L——n* as a Preacher, to which Office, to be sure, he has no more Call from God than he has from Man.

BUT give me Leave, Sir, without Offence, to ask by what Authority you take upon yourself to approve or disapprove of Preachers, or who gave you any such Authority? But above all, let me conjure you to tell me by what (more than pontifical Authority) do you take upon yourself to settle Lay-preachers within certain Bounds and Districts, in open Defiance to the twenty-third Article of that Church, from which, you say, you have not as yet separated, and probably (but not certainly) never shall. Though, in my humble Opinion, you can hardly make a greater Separation from her, than by assuming, within the Bounds and Limits of her Jurisdiction, a Liberty to settle and send forth Lay-preachers into all Parts of *England* and *Ireland*, to gather Disciples after you, to form them into Societies, under certain Rules of Government and Discipline of your own framing, not only without the Consent and Approbation of the chief Governors in either Church, either had or desired, (though at your Ordination you vowed all due Submission and Obedience to them) but in direct Opposition to them all.

As to Lay-preachers, I pray you will consider, that the seven first Deacons, though they were good Men and full of the Holy Ghost, were not allowed to execute so mean an Office as taking Care of the Poor, and distributing the Alms of the Faithful among them (which was their first and original Office) until they

they were publickly ordained by the Hands of the Apostles. And it is very remarkable, that tho' *Barnabas* and *Paul* were some Time before called to be supernumerary Apostles at large, yet when it pleased the Holy Ghost to employ them in a peculiar and particular Ministry, the same Holy Spirit ordered them to be ordained for that Ministry, by the Imposition of the Hands of the Governors of the Church at *Antioch*, *Acts* xiii. 2, 3. And how you came by a Power to grant a Privilege, which was not even allowed to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, is what, I think, imports you very much to take into your serious Consideration.

I AM glad you acknowledge Mr. *L——n* and Mr. *B——m* to be, or at least to have been, real Enthusiasts, and could wish you did seriously reflect, that if among the few Profelytes which your Doctrine and Discipline has made, in this remote Corner of the Kingdom, there be two confessed (and it is very probable, if not certain, that there are many more than are confessed) Enthusiasts, what vast Numbers of Enthusiasts (that is, in Reality, of religious Madmen) your Doctrine and Discipline has made in all other Parts of *England* and *Ireland*, and that the Guilt of all the Blasphemies which these Madmen shall, at any time in their frantick Fits, be guilty of, will be laid to your Charge, at least as an Accessory, at the great Day of Account.

I REMEMBER to have read some Years ago a Pamphlet wrote by an anonymous Author of your Society, wherein he made a Collection of all the Texts in the New Testament where there is any mention made of the Spirit, or its Influences, either ordinary or extraordinary; of all which he does promiscuously, without any Distinction or Reservation, affirm, that every Christian has a Right to expect them, and that whoever has them not is no Child of God, but a mere Reprobate.

Now

Now when such Doctrine as this is inculcated upon poor ignorant Creatures, who have the least Spark of natural Enthusiasm in their Tempers or Constitutions, (and there are but few who have not some little Spark of it) I appeal to your own Judgment, to what a Height this Fever of the Mind (for in Reality natural Enthusiasm is nothing else) may be raised and fomented, by such outward Incentives and Applications; and what a horrid Affront it must be to the Holy Ghost, to have all the wild Imaginations of such hot-headed Enthusiasts fathered upon him.

As to Mr. *L*——'s Behaviour with respect to me, it was not worth your Notice; I rather expected some Marks of your Resentment against his Blasphemy, in equalling himself to the Son of God for Righteousness, and his pretending to a State of Impeccability, on account of his being (in his own Imagination) bodily possessed with the Holy Ghost, of which, to my great Surprise, you take no manner of Notice, either by confessing or denying the Charge; for either he is guilty of the Charge, or not; if he be, I humbly conceive that you ought rather to have expressed your Disapprobation of the Blasphemy, than of his Behaviour to me, were it a thousand times more irregular than it was; but if he be not guilty, then why is not the Charge denied, and he not suffered to lie under the Imputation of it; by saying nothing either one way or another about it, and giving too much room to conclude him guilty, from your profound Silence upon that Head?

FROM the Text of your Sermon, you say, you infer not, that Christians should not enquire into each others Opinions in Religion; nay, it seems you infer nothing at all from it, and then I must needs greatly admire to what purpose you placed it in the Front of your Sermon; if you designed to infer nothing at all from it, what Business had it there? Or why do you,
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in the Introduction ^c to your following Discourse, tell your Audience, that your Text contained Matter very well worth the serious Imitation and Attention of every Christian? And how this was possible, if nothing at all was to be inferred from it, I own, for my Part, I cannot conceive.

BUT you used it, you say, to illustrate, not to prove. This is still more unaccountable; for Preachers generally do, or at least I am sure ought, to take their Matter from their Text, and to illustrate that Matter by other parallel Texts of Scripture: But notwithstanding all you do now, or indeed can say to the contrary, it seems to me very evidently plain, from the two first Observations which you draw from your Text, that your real Design was to prove, not to illustrate; your Observations were, that *Jebu* did not enquire into *Jebonadab's* Principles in Religion, or his Manner of Worship. Now in the Name of common Ingenuity, what other possible View could you have in making these two Observations on your Text, than thereby to prove, that Christians should not enquire into each others religious Principles, or their Modes of Worship? For was not *Jebu's* not enquiring into *Jebonadab's* Principles; &c. the Matter which you told your Audience was so well worth their serious Imitation and Attention? And therefore was it not most plainly your Design to persuade your Audience, that they ought not to enquire into each others Principles, any more than *Jebu* enquired into *Jebonadab's*?

BUT still, you say, your Design was not to shew what *Jebu* meant by the Question, but what a Child of God means, or is understood to mean by it, when he proposes it to his Brother.

LET us then suppose that this was really your Design, what, in your Opinion, should a Child of God mean by it, when he proposes it to his Brother? Do you not think he ought not thereby to intend any Enquiry

quiry into his religious Principles, or the Mode or Manner of his Worship? And does it not, from the Passages which I quoted from your Sermon in my former Letter, appear that you think he ought not?

BUT pray, Sir, why may not a Child of God, by this Question, *Is your Heart right?* &c. Why, I say, may he not mean, design, and intend to enquire and know whether his Brother has the same true Principles of Religion as he has himself? Is there any thing in such a Design inconsistent with the Question, or in the Question with the Design? Nay, to the contrary, what can be more natural for a Child of God than by this Question, *Is your Heart right?* &c. to mean, are you of the same Opinion with me in Matters of Religion, and do you worship God after the same manner that I do?

IN one Word, when a true Follower of Christ proposes such a Question to his Brother, I humbly conceive that he may very naturally and truly be understood to mean, Whether he is a true Believer? Whether his Principles in Religion be sound and orthodox? He may, I say, be as well presumed to mean this, as any of those Particulars which, you say, he does or ought to mean by it.

AND this is apparent from the very first Thing which you acknowledge to be implied in the Question, when proposed by a Child of God to his Brother, “Dost thou believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, God
“over all, blessed for evermore? which, you say, no
“Arrian, Semi-Arrian, or Socinian can answer in the
“Affirmative:” And therefore this Question evidently implies a Desire in the Proposer to know whether he to whom it is proposed believes in Christ as God, as the Catholick Church and as every true Follower of Christ ought to do; or as a Creature, as the Arrians, Semi-Arrians, and Socinians do, and believe him to be; and consequently implies an Enquiry into his religious Principles or Sentiments.

HAD

HAD you told us in your Sermon, that you only postponed enquiring into your Brother's religious Principles, 'till ye were better acquainted, and had confirmed your Loves to each other, I could have no room to except against it; but as you affirmed in general Terms, without any such Reservation expressed, that you desired to have no Dispute with any one about their religious Principles, and that particularly with regard to the Quakers denying Baptism and the Lord's Supper, you discourse in the following Manner, pag. 18. of your Sermon: " My Sentiment is, say
 " you, that I ought not to forbid Water wherein
 " Persons are baptized, and that I ought to eat Bread
 " and drink Wine in Memory of my dying Master;
 " but if you (meaning a Quaker) are not convinced
 " of this, act according to the Light you have, I
 " have no Desire to dispute with you one Moment
 " about them, let all these SMALLER Matters stand
 " aside, let them NEVER (it is your own express
 " Term) come in fight."

Now, Sir, considering how very slightly and superficially you here speak of the two venerable and awful Mysteries of the Christian Religion, the Badges of our Profession and the Means of Grace, and how very little you seem to think of the indispensable Obligation that lies on all Christians to use them, as positive Institutions and Commands of their divine Lord and Master: Considering, I say, all this, together with many other the like Expressions throughout that whole Sermon, I think I had, and still have, very good Grounds to conclude, that you are very indifferent as to any Man's Principles in Religion, and that you thereby open a wide Gap to a pernicious Latitudinarianism in Speculation and Opinion, which you yourself (p. 22. of your Sermon) very justly and truly call the Curse of Heaven, and the Spawn of Hell.

AND here I cannot but observe, how very cautiously and dubiously you speak in your Letter, even when

when you are endeavouring to clear yourself of the Imputation of Indifference as to all Opinions, though all your Endeavours are only so many Protestations against plain Facts; and I may justly say, *Quid Verba audiam cum facta Videam*: For after all, it is only a peradventure you may, and peradventure you may not, even after a thorough Acquaintance and Confirmation of mutual Love, dispute with any one about his religious Opinions, though never so contrary or opposite to your own: This, you say, will depend upon a Variety of Circumstances, particularly upon the Probability of Success, being resolved, you say, never to dispute at all, until you have some Hopes of convincing your Opponent.

THIS, Sir, very much resembles the Resolution of the Man, who wisely resolved never to go into the Water till he had learned to swim; but as it was impossible he could learn to swim until he went into the Water, so I am at a Loss to know, how you can have any Hopes of convincing an Opponent, till you first reason or argue, which is all that is meant by disputing, with him: And though I grant that the Hopes of Success are a great Encouragement, yet I do not think the want of them can cancel the Obligation we lye under, to use our best Endeavours to recover our Brother from a dangerous Error: We are, I conceive, to do our own Duty, and to leave the Success to God, who will accept our Labour of Love towards our Brother, not according to the Success, but according to the Charity and Sincerity of our Intentions.

As to the Government of the Church by Bishops, though it be, you say, your Judgment that it is both scriptural and apostolical, yet that it is prescribed in Scripture, you say, you do not believe. Sir, I must say that this Distinction of yours, and the Difference you make between being scriptural and apostolical, and being prescribed in Scripture, is as nice and subtle, as ever was made Use of upon a Pinch by any Popish

Pepish Schoolman : Nay, it is a Distinction without any manner of Difference ; for if the episcopal Form was that which the Apostles settled, in all the Churches which they planted, and which they recommended in their Writings, (and if it was not so, how could it be agreeable to their Practice and Writings, which, you say, is what you mean by its being scriptural and apostolical ?) I think it plain to Evidence and Demonstration, that this is equivalent to, and the same thing as, being prescribed in Scripture ; and I believe every Man of common Sense and Reason will be of the same Opinion.

BUT, it seems, though you were once a zealous Assertor of the scriptural Prescription of Episcopacy, yet now you are heartily ashamed of that Opinion, ever since you read Dr. *Stillingfleet's Irenicum*, wherein you think he has unanswerably proved, that neither Christ nor his Apostles established any particular Form of Church Government, and that the Plea for the divine Right of Episcopacy, was never heard of in the primitive Church.

SIR, had you thoroughly considered and weighed the Grounds of the Opinion which, you say, you once zealously asserted, you ought rather to be heartily ashamed of quitting it, upon so weak a Pretence as reading Dr. *Stillingfleet's Irenicum*. For if my Memory does not fail, (for I have not the Book, and there are many Years past since I read it) the Doctor does not, nor indeed could he with any Colour of Truth, affirm, that neither Christ nor his Apostles established any particular Form of Church Government ; for sure they left the Church under some Form of Government, whatever it was ; but his main Design was to prove, that they settled no particular Form that was unalterable : He confesses, that the episcopal was the Form under which the Apostles left the Churches, and only contends that they left it as a
Form

Form that might be changed, according to the difference of Time and Place.

BUT be that as it will, you ought to have considered, that there have been other Divines as learned and judicious as the Doctor, who have taken upon them to prove the direct contrary by irrefragable Arguments; particularly Mr. *Chillingworth*, in his Treatise of the *Divine Right of Episcopacy*: And above all, you should have considered, that the Doctor wrote his *Irenicum* in his younger Days, with a pacifick View, to compose and put an End to the great Heats and Animosities, then subsisting in their greatest Height, between those of the episcopal Persuasion and the Presbyterians; and that out of his ardent Zeal for the Peace of the Church, he made some Concessions which he afterwards recanted, ^d and was as heartily ashamed of, as you now seem to be of that Opinion which, you say, you were once a zealous Assertor of.

As for the Plea for the divine Right of Episcopacy, if it was not *ex professo* pleaded in the primitive Times, there is a very good Reason to be assigned for it; because no Man in those Days disputed or called it in Question; ¹²⁶ *Arrius* who was the first that did, is reckoned by *Epiphanius*, to be no less than a Monster, and he was unanimously condemned by the whole Church universal.

IN the late Revolution, when Episcopacy was abolished by Act of Parliament in *Scotland*, there was a very learned Divine of the Church of *Scotland*, who published a Book in *London*, intitled, *The principles of the Cyprianick Age, with regard to episcopal Power and Jurisdiction*; and soon after he published a Vindication of that Discourse, against the Answer of *Gilbert Rule*, principal Regent of the University of *Edinburgh*, and the stated and authorised Champion of the *Scottish* Presbyterian Kirk: In the Vindication there is a whole Chapter upon the divine Right of Episcopacy, in which the

^d See the Appendix to his *Irenicum*.

the Author proves, that all the Fathers of that Age, (the third Century) did look upon Episcopacy as of divine Right, and reasoned upon Supposition of it; and he proves it by such Arguments and express Testimonies, as would, I am perswaded, puzzle either the Doctor if he were alive, or even you your self to answer: I recommend the Book to your perusal, or of any one who is desirous of thorough Satisfaction, in the Controversy between the Church and the Presbyterians, about Church Government.

As to Heresy and Schism, you cannot, you say, find any one Text in the Bible where they are taken in the modern Sense; or any Scripture wherein Heresy is taken for an Error in Opinion, whether fundamental or not; or where Schism signifies Separation from the Church, with Cause or without; and you wish me to re-consider the Point, and review the several Texts where these Terms occur.

IN Reply to this I can only say, that I could wish you had informed me in what other possible Sense, than the modern, you yourself understand these Terms; or what Difference you make between the modern and the antient Sense of them; or, in a Word, whether you believe there is any such thing as a damnable Heresy or Schism; or whether you take them to be mere insignificant Terms, without any determinate Sense or Meaning.

I HAVE, at your Request, re-considered this Point very seriously, and have examined the most material Texts, wherein the Term, especially that of Heresy, occurs: And as to the Term Heresy, I find there is a Difference between the strict Notation of the Word, and the ecclesiastical Use of it, as a technical Term: In the strict Notation of it, I find it signifies merely, and only, Election or Choice, being derived from a Greek Verb * which signifies to chuse; hence the Word *αἵρεσις*, came to signify any Opinion, System,

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or

* *αἵρεσις*, *Eligo*.

or Profession which a Man chuses to hold, maintain, or profess; without any Note or Brand of Malignity necessarily annexed to it; and in this Sense I understand the Term as it occurs, *Aets* xxiv. 5. and *Aets* xxvi. 5. But in the ecclesiastical Sense of the Term it signifies an Error voluntarily chosen, and obstinately adhered to, and consequently has always a Note or Brand of Malignity affixed to it. And in this Sense I understand the Term as it occurs, 1. *Cor.* xi. 18, 19, and 2. *Pet.* ii. 1. According to this ecclesiastical use of the Word *Αἵρεσις*, or Heresy, is defined by *Phavorinus* to be *ἡ ἀρετὴ αἰρετικῶς καὶ ἀληθοῦς δόξα*, that is, a false Opinion conceived or entertained concerning the Faith, or any Part, Branch, or Article of it: for as Apostacy is the renouncing or casting off the whole and intire Faith, so Heresy is the renouncing or casting off any Part, Branch, or Article of it.

THIS appears plainly from 2. *Pet.* ii. 1. where the Apostle, speaking of false Prophets, says, that they privily brought in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. The judicious *Grotius*, upon the Text, supposes that the *Carpocratians* were the false Prophets here aimed at by the Apostle: These Hereticks affirmed, that Jesus was only the Son of *Joseph* and *Mary*, born in the natural way of Generation, denying his Divinity and Eternity, and consequently denying the Honour that was due to him. Hence, I think, it evidently follows, that Heresy, according to Scripture, is the Denial of, or a false Opinion conceived or entertained, concerning some necessary Article of Faith, for such, I hope, you allow the believing of Christ's Divinity and Eternity to be; the denial of which, *St. Peter* expressly calls a Damnable Heresy. Whilst a Man keeps his false Opinion to himself, he is but a mere and simple Heretick only; but if he propagates his false Opinion, either by preaching or writing, and gathers Disciples after him, in Opposition to, or Separation from the Church, he then

then becomes a Schismatick, or Separatist from her Communion, as well as a Heretick from her Faith. In a Word, Sir, I never heard or read of any other Sense or Meaning of the Words Heresy and Schism, (especially as understood by all the antient and primitive Saints and Fathers of God's Church) according to the ecclesiastical Use of these Terms, than that one was an obstinate Denial of some necessary Article of the Faith, and the other a causeless Separation from an orthodox and true Church, when no sinful Term or Condition of Communion is either required or imposed; and should be extremely obliged to you, if you were pleased to inform me, in what other Sense or Meaning you do, or indeed possibly can, understand these Terms, as they occur in those Places of Scripture, wherein they are most evidently branded with Notes and Marks of Malignity.

In your Postscript you tell me, that what you mean by Orthodoxy's being, at the very best, but a slender Part of Religion, if it may be allowed to be any Part at all of it, (which it seems with you is a Question,) is, that in a Child of God, holy in Heart and Life, his right Opinions are but the slenderest Parts of his Religion; but in a Child of the Devil they are no Part at all, nor indeed can be, because a Child of the Devil has no Religion at all.

In order to set this Matter in a clear Light, let me observe to you, that when we speak of Religion, we are, I humbly presume, by Religion supposed to mean, the entertaining and conceiving suitable Thoughts and Apprehensions of the Nature of God, his Attributes, and his Word, in our Minds; and the exemplifying and expressing these inward Thoughts and Apprehensions, by such outward Acknowledgments and Actions, as are suitable to our natural Notions of the Diety, and to the Revelations and Directions which God has been pleased to make and to give, either by the clear Dictates of Reason, or of the Holy Scrip-

tures, concerning these outward Actions and Acknowledgments. Now Orthodoxy is nothing else but the conceiving and entertaining of such Sentiments and Thoughts concerning God, his Nature, Attributes, and Words, as are agreeable to our natural Notions of the Deity, and to the Revelations and Directions which God has been pleased to make, and give us concerning them: And therefore most evidently Orthodoxy is as necessary and essential a Part of Religion, as the outward Acts and Acknowledgments that result from it; nay, in some Sense it is a more necessary and essential Part, because of the great Influence which either Orthodoxy or Heterodoxy has upon Practice, either for the better or the worse: For entertaining wrong Notions or Opinions concerning the Nature, Attributes, or Word of God, does, in many Cases and Instances, produce such outward Acts, as are rather a Dishonour than an Honour to him. Men of unsound and heterodox Opinions, and Principles, are generally (I had almost said necessarily) unsound in their Practice; whereas sound and orthodox Opinions and Principles, do generally and naturally produce sound and holy Actions, as a good Tree naturally produces good Fruit.

BUT to argue as you do, that because a Child of the Devil has no Religion at all, that therefore Orthodoxy is no Part of Religion, is the strangest Inference I have ever met with. Pray, Sir, is Holiness of Heart and Life no Part of Religion, because a Child of the Devil has no Religion at all? You will not, I am sure, affirm it; and yet you may with as much Reason and Truth affirm it, as you do that Orthodoxy is no Part of Religion, because a Child of the Devil has no Religion at all. It is, Sir, in this Case, as I conceive, as in the Case of Faith and Good Works, both which are equally necessary; and as we cannot say that Faith is not necessary, because St. *James* says, that without good Works it is dead, and has no Life or Energy in it, so neither can we say, that Orthodoxy is no Part of Religion,

Religion, because to a Child of the Devil, who has not a suitable Practice, it is useless and of no Effect.

I ACKNOWLEDGE that tho' we cannot unite in all Opinions, yet we may unite in Love; tho' at the same Time you must allow, that the greater our Union in Opinion is, the greater and closer our Union in Love will consequently be; and that therefore the greater should be our Endeavours to attain the former, in order to obtain the latter. I also acknowledge, that the best of our Endeavours should be applied towards beating down all manner of Sin, both in ourselves and others; but then, I humbly presume, that it is, on the other Hand, incumbent on us to use proportionable Endeavours, towards banishing all strange and erroneous Doctrines and Opinions, as an excellent Means to beat down many Sins, and especially because in many Cases, we cannot do the one without the other. As for Instance, how can you convince a Papist of the crying Sin of Idolatry in worshipping the Host, unless you first convince him of the Falseness of the Doctrine of Transubstantiation. For so long as he believes that Doctrine, he can never be persuaded that it is any Sin, but rather an indispensable Duty to worship the Host.

To conclude, Sir, you must give me Leave to be so free to declare, that I think it too plainly appears from your Discourse upon Catholick Spirit, from the Rule and Maxim, which you and your Brother laid down to yourselves, when ye undertook the Propagation of Methodism in *London*, and from the weak, (and you must excuse me if I call it) evasive Answer and Defence you make in your Letter, that you are either indifferent as to any Man's Principles in Religion, and consequently guilty of that Latitudinarianism in Speculation which you yourself very justly and truly call the Curse of Heaven and Spawn of Hell; or else, that you conceal your Sentiments, in order to ingratiate yourself with the Dissenters from

that Church, whereof you do as yet profess yourself a Member, thereby to facilitate (for the farther strengthening and enlarging your Party and Society) your gaining the more Profelytes from among them.

BUT I rather, in Charity, believe the former than the latter; because, in Reality, the former may be an Error of your Judgment only, but the latter is such a gross Piece of Hypocrisy and Prevarication, as I would not readily suspect any one, much less a Reverend Brother, could be guilty of. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Hollymount,
July 9th,
1756.

Your, &c.

J. C.



L E T T E R I V .

Mr. WESLY'S Answer to the foregoing Letter.

Rev. Sir,

London, Sept. 18, 1756.

YESTERDAY I received your Favour of *July 9th*; as you therein speak freely and openly, I will endeavour to do the same, at which I am persuaded you will not be displeas'd.

1. OF the Words imputed to Mr. *Langston* I said nothing, because he denied the Charge, and I had not an Opportunity of having the Accuser and the Accused Face to Face.

2. THAT there are Enthusiasts among the Methodists I doubt not, and among most other People under Heaven; but that they are made such by our Doctrine and Discipline still remains to be proved: If they

they are such in spite of our Doctrine and Discipline, their Madness will not be laid to our Charge.

I KNOW nothing about the anonymous Pamphlet on Inspiration. How does it appear to be wrote by one of my Disciples? Be it good, bad, or indifferent I am not concerned, or any way accountable for it.

3. I BELIEVE several who are not episcopally ordained, are nevertheless called of God to preach the Gospel; yet I have no Exception to the twenty-third Article, tho' I judge there are exempt Cases. That the seven Deacons were outwardly ordained, even to that low Office, cannot be denied; but when *Paul* and *Barnabas* were separated for the Work to which they were called, this was not ordaining them; *St. Paul* was ordained long before, and that not of Man nor by Men; it was inducting him into the Province for which our Lord had appointed him from the Beginning. For this End the Prophets and Teachers fasted and prayed, and laid their Hands upon them, a Rite which was used, not in Ordination only but in Blessing, and many other Occasions.

4. CONCERNING Diocesan Episcopacy, there are several Questions which I should be glad to have answered, as, 1. Where is it prescribed in Scripture? 2. How does it appear that the Apostles settled it in all the Churches which they planted? 3. How does it appear they settled it in any, so as to make it of perpetual Obligation? It is allowed that Christ and his Apostles settled the Church under some Form of Government; but, 1. Did they put all Churches under the same precise Form? If they did, 2. Can we prove this to be the precise Form, and the very same which now obtains in *England*?

5. How *Phavorinus* or many more may define Heresy or Schism, I am not concerned to know: I well know Heresy is vulgarly defined, "a false Opinion touching some necessary Article of Faith; and "Schism a causeless Separation from a true Church:"

But I keep to my Bible, as our Church in her sixth Article teaches me; therefore I cannot take Schism for a Separation from a Church, because I cannot find it so taken in Scripture; the first time I meet the Term there is 1 *Cor.* i. 10. I meet with it again ch. xi. 18. But it is plain in both Places, by Schism is meant, not any Separation from the Church, but uncharitable Divisions in it; for the *Corinthians* continued to be one Church, notwithstanding their Strife and Contention; there was no Separation of one Part from the other, with regard to external Communion; it is in the same Sense the Word is used ch. xii. 25; and these are the only Places in the New Testament where the Term occurs: Therefore the indulging any unkind Temper towards our fellow Christians is the true scriptural Schism.

INDEED both Heresy and Schism (which are Works of the Flesh, and consequently damnable if not repented) are here mentioned by the Apostle in very near the same Sense, unless by Schisms be meant rather those inward Animosities which occasioned Heresies, that is outward Divisions and Parties; so that while one said I am of *Paul*, another I am of *Apollos*, this implied both Heresy and Schism; so wonderfully have latter Ages distorted the Words Heresies and Schisms from their scriptural Meaning: Heresy is not in all the Bible taken for an Error in Fundamentals, nor in any thing else; nor Schism for any Separation from the Communion of others; therefore Heresy and Schism, in the modern Sense of the Words, are Sins that the Scriptures know nothing of.

6. BUT tho' I aver this, am I quite indifferent as to any Man's Principles in Religion? Far, very far from it, as I have declared again and again, in the very Sermon under present Consideration, in the *Character of a Methodist*, in the *Plain Account*, and twenty Tracts besides, I have written severally against Deists, Papists, Mysticks, &c. an odd way to ingratiate

gratiate myself with them, to strike at the Apple of their Eye. Nevertheless in all Things indifferent (but not at the Expence of Truth) I rejoice to please all Men for their Good to Edification, if happily I may gain the more Profelytes to genuine scriptural Christianity; if I may prevail on the more to love God and their Neighbour, and to walk as Christ walked. So far as I find them obstructive of these, I oppose Opinions with my Might; though even then, rather by guarding those that are free, than by disputing with those that are deeply infected: I need not dispute with many of them to know there is no Probability of Success, or of convincing them. A thousand times I have found my Father's Words true, "You may have Peace with the Dissenters, if you do not so humour them as to dispute with them; if you do, they will out-face and out-lung you, and at the End you will be just where you were in the Beginning."

I HAVE now, Sir, humoured you so as to dispute a little with you; but with what Probability of Success? Suppose you have a single Eye in this Debate? Suppose you aim not at Victory, but at the Truth? Yet what Man of threescore (unless perchance one in an Age) was ever convinced? Is not an old Man's Motto *Non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris*? When we are past middle Age, do we not find a kind of Stiffness and Inflexibility stealing upon the Mind as well as on the Body? And does not this bar the Gate against all Conviction? Even before the Eye of the Soul grows dim, and so less and less capable of discerning Things which we are not already well acquainted with.

7. YET on one Point I must add a few Words, because it is of the last Importance. I said Orthodoxy, or right Opinion, was never more than a slender Part of Religion, and sometimes no Part at all, and this I explained thus; "in a Child of God it is but a slender Part, in a Child of the Devil it is no Part at all of Religion." The Religion of a Child of God is Righ-

Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost; Now if Orthodoxy be any Part of this, (which in itself might admit of a Question) it is certainly a very slender Part; tho' it is a considerable Help of Love, Peace, and Joy. Religion, in other Words, is the Love of God and Man, producing all Holiness of Conversation; now are right Opinions any more than a slender Part (if they be so much) of this? Once more, Religion is the Mind that was in Christ, and walking as Christ walked; now how slender a Part of this are Opinions, how right soever?

By a Child of the Devil, I mean one that neither loves, fears, or serves God, and has no true Religion at all; but it is certain such a Man may be still orthodox, may entertain right Opinions; and yet it is equally certain, these are no Parts of Religion in him that has no Religion at all.

PERMIT me, Sir, to speak exceeding plainly: Are you not an orthodox Man? Perhaps there is none more so in the Diocese; yet possibly you may have no Religion at all; if it be true that you frequently drink to Excess, you may have Orthodoxy, but you can have no Religion; if when you are in a Passion you call your Brother, thou Fool, you have no Religion at all; if you then even curse and swear, by taking God's Name in vain, you can have no other Religion but Orthodoxy; a Religion of which the Devil and his Angels have as much as you.

O! SIR, what an idle Thing it is for you to dispute about Lay-preachers! Is not a Lay-preacher preferable to a drunken Preacher, to a cursing, swearing Preacher? *To the Ungodly, saith God, why takest thou my Covenant in thy Mouth, whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and cast my Words behind thee?* In tender Compassion I speak this, may God apply it to your Heart, and then you will not receive this as an Affront, but as the truest Instance of Brotherly Love, from,

Yours, &c.

J. W.
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L E T T E R V.

A third Letter to Mr. WESLY.

Rev. Sir,

I RECEIVED your Favour, dated from *London* the 18th instant, and that very unexpectedly; because, though I did at first design to have sent the Letter to you, to which this comes as an Answer, yet finding you had left this Part of the Country, before I had an Opportunity of sending it to you, and (on account of the quickness of your Motions from one Place to another) not knowing whither to direct it for you, I took a Resolution of dropping all further epistolary Correspondence with you, foreseeing that the Dispute between us would, in the End, come to what I find, by this your last Favour, it has actually done; namely, that you would put me off with some inconsistent sophistical Answers and shuffling Evasions, or else, that when you had nothing else to say for yourself, you would (like most Disputants in the like Circumstances, have Recourse to bare-faced Scandal and personal Reflection; both which, but especially of the last, you have in a Manner very unbecoming a Gentleman or a Scholar, not to talk of the Christian or the Clergyman, given me sufficient Proof in this your last Letter.

But because some of your Disciples have, by some clandestine Means, procured a Copy of the Letter which I had designed to have sent you, and transmitted it to you to *London*, I will for this Time break thro' the Resolution I had taken, and will continue the Correspondence; and shall, because I design it for the last Essay, give you so full and particular an Answer, Paragraph by Paragraph, as I hope may, if you are capable of it, convince you of your Errors, and make you ashamed of the ungentleman-like Treatment which,

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out of your great and tender Compassion, you have been pleased to afford me.

IN your first Paragraph you excuse your not mentioning the Charge of Blasphemy exhibited against *Langston*, because, as you say, he denied the Charge, and that you had not the Accuser and the Accused Face to Face.

WHETHER Mr. *Langston* denied the Charge, or not, is best known to yourselves both; but then I think his denying it, instead of being a Reason for your Silence about it, ought to be the only Motive to induce you to say something of or concerning it, both in Justice to him and Charity to me, as you could not but know, it was natural for me to take your Silence for Consent, and Acknowledgment of the Charge, and thereupon conclude him guilty. But, Sir, please to inform me, how came you, when Mr. *Bermingham*, in one of your Meetings at *Castlebar*, accused the same Mr. *Langston* of several heinous Crimes and Enormities, and offered to produce undeniable Evidences to support and prove the Accusation; how came you, I say, to quash and smother the Indictment, and not suffer it to be brought to the Test? I suppose, if an Accuser had appeared to prove the Charge of Blasphemy against him, he would meet with no better Encouragement or Reception than Mr. *Bermingham* did; so tender were you of the Reputation of a blasphemous Lay-preacher of your own Society, and so very ready to entertain a false and groundless Calumny against the Reputation of a Brother Clergyman.

AND here, Sir, you must give me Leave to put you in mind, that having told me in your first Letter that Mr. *Langston* was no Preacher approved by you, I did, as I thought, very civilly intreat the Favour of you to let me know by what Authority you took upon you to approve or disapprove of Preachers, or who gave you that Authority? Or by what (more than pontifical) Authority you presumed to fix Lay-preachers or Leaders

ers as you call them, in several Districts of the Country, in open Defiance to the chief Governors of the Church, to whom at your Ordination you vowed all due Submission and Obedience: But to this very civil Request you have given a deaf Ear, and not vouchsafed to return the least Word of Answer; either because you thought it beneath you to give me the Satisfaction I requested, or rather, more probably, because you were conscious to yourself, that you could not assign any Authority sufficient to justify your Presumption in so irregular and altogether illegal a Conduct. I am afraid, Sir, I shall have more Occasion to put you in mind of some other more material Omissions before I have done with you. But to return to Mr. Langston.

IF the unhappy Man was guilty of the Blasphemy (I fear too truly) laid to his Charge, he may thank you, and no other, for it; for if ever he read your *Serious Answer to Dr. Trap*, and understood the Consequence of what he read, it was almost impossible for him, if he believed what he read to be true, not to fall into that, or some other equivalent Blasphemy. For in that Answer, besides many bold, unwarrantable Propositions, advanced by you concerning the Fall of Men and Angels, and which you yourself, or somebody for you, acknowledge, with a *Nota bene* at the Bottom of the Page, to be destitute of all Scripture Proof or Authority, I find the following Words^f:

“ As we are, say you, earthly, corrupt, worldly
 “ Men, by having the Life and Nature of the first
 “ *Adam* propagated in us; so must we become holy,
 “ paradisaical, and heavenly Men, by having the
 “ Nature and Life of the second *Adam* propagated
 “ in us, or, as the Scripture speaks, by being born
 “ again: Jesus Christ therefore stands as our Rege-
 “ neration to help us, by a second Birth from him,
 “ to the same holy, undefiled Nature, which he him-
 “ self

^f Page 29, 30.

“ self assumed in the Womb of the blessed Virgin
 “ *Mary*, and which we should have received in Pa-
 “ radise from our first Father before his Fall ;” and
 you positively affirm, “ that if the very Life and iden-
 “ tical Nature of Christ be not propagated and deri-
 “ ved in us, he is not our Saviour.”

Now who can admire that *Langston* reading this Passage, and taking all your Doctrines for Oracles, and in one of the Paroxysms of his Enthusiasm fancying himself thus regenerated, who can admire, I say, that he should thereupon believe that he had, by being so regenerated, the very Nature, Life, and Spirit of Christ derived and propagated in him ; nay, that holy, undefiled, and paradisaical Nature which he assumed in the Womb of the holy Virgin ; from which nothing could be more natural for him than to conclude, that he was thereupon become as righteous and free from Sin as ever Jesus Christ was.

FOR if it be really true that by Regeneration, or the second Birth, we have the holy, spotless, and paradisaical Nature of Christ, even that undefiled Nature which he assumed in the Womb of the holy Virgin ; if, I say, we have this very Nature as truly and really derived and propagated in us by a second Birth, as we have the corrupted Nature of the first *Adam* propagated and derived in us by our first Birth, it seems evidently to follow, that upon this second Birth we become as righteous and free from Sin as ever Jesus Christ was : For if we have his very identical Nature, Life, and Spirit propagated in us, we must of Necessity have his Righteousness and Freedom from Sin, which are the necessary Consequences of his holy, undefiled, and paradisaical Nature, propagated in us also. And thus, Sir, by a plain and necessary Consequence from this Doctrine ^s of yours, you were the
 (almost)

^s This Doctrine, besides its being directly contrary to the ninth Article of our Church, which affirms the Corruption of Nature to remain

(almost) unavoidable Occasion of that poor Soul's Blasphemy ; for which, unless you endeavour to disabuse him, you will most certainly be accountable as an Accessory at the last Day.

To your second Paragraph I answer, that it is not only past Doubt that there are some Enthusiasts among the Methodists, but it is certain and evident to all the World that most, if not all, of them are so : This at least is most manifest, that there are more Enthusiasts among them than among any other Denomination of Christians in the three Nations ; and I am very apt to think that you yourself are as great an Enthusiast (though you may not be sensible of it) as any among them ; and that all this must be owing to your Doctrine and Discipline, no better Proof can be desired, or indeed rationally expected, than that however sober or rational Men may be before, yet they no sooner become your Disciples than they do then, or soon after, become manifest Enthusiasts.

As to the anonymous Pamphlet upon Inspiration, I can no otherwise prove the Author to be a Disciple of yours than by affirming, as I can with Truth do, that it was recommended and put into my Hands for a Methodist Book ; and I am very much inclined to believe that it was really so, for this very good Reason, because the Author, whoever he was, copies exactly after yourself ; for you (as well as all other Methodists, with whom or their Writings I have had any Conversation or Acquaintance) strenuously plead for the extraordinary and immediate Inspirations and Influences of the Holy Ghost, as absolutely necessary to every Christian ; and you, in particular, in your Answer to Dr. *Trapp*, p. 49. ridicule the Distinction and Difference between the extraordinary and immediate, and the ordinary and mediate Influences and Inspirations of the Holy Ghost, calling it a mere Dream ;
and

remain in the Regenerate, is over and above bordering upon Blasphemy.

and how naturally such Doctrine as this leads to Enthusiasm, the evident Effects of it upon the Generality of your Disciples, who take all your Doctrines for Oracles, plainly demonstrate.

IN your third Paragraph you tell me, that you believe several are called of God to preach the Gospel, though not episcopally ordained; and yet you say, you have no Exception to the twenty-third Article of our Church, though you judge there are some Cases exempt.

NEVER, I believe, was so much Sophistry and Inconsistency couched together in so few Lines; for by your mentioning episcopal Ordination, one would be apt to imagine you had some other Kind or Species of Ordination in view; and who knows but you mean some Ordination of your own, by virtue of which you think your Preachers may lawfully preach, though not episcopally ordained; and that therefore you may say you have no Objection to the Article; for though the Article says, that no Man may take upon him the Office of publick preaching, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same, yet as it does not mention an episcopal Mission in Terms, possibly you may imagine that your own Call and Mission may be equivalent to any episcopal Call or Mission whatsoever; for I know no other possible Means of clearing you from a most evident and glaring Inconsistency, in allowing Men to exercise the Office of publick preaching, without any visible Call or Mission but what they receive from yourself; and at the same Time declaring, that you have no Objection to the Article, which flatly condemns all who take upon them that Office, without a regular Call from those who have publick Authority given them in the Church or Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's Vineyard; and in the Church of *England* none have this Authority but the Bishops. In a Word, either the Article is false, or, if true, there is no other way of clearing you

you of acting in Opposition to it, but by supposing that you look upon your Society as a distinct Church, and that your Call or Mission in your own Church, is equivalent to an episcopal Call or Mission in the established Church. But,

2. By being called of God to preach the Gospel, you must either mean that they have a direct and immediate Call, such as the Prophets and Apostles had; or else, that though they have not such an immediate and direct Call, yet they have by their own Study, and the ordinary Blessing of God upon their Endeavours, acquired such Gifts and Talents as qualify and enable them to preach, though they are neither episcopally or otherwise ordained. If you mean it in the first Sense, I readily grant that such as are so called may lawfully preach, without any other Ordination, provided they can prove their Call after the same Manner that the Prophets, Apostles, and other inspired Persons proved theirs, that is, by plain and incontestable Miracles; otherwise no Man can, in Reason or Prudence, believe that they are so called, or consequently that they can preach by Virtue of such a pretended Call, (for it can be no more than pretended till sufficiently proved, nor can it be so proved otherwise than by Miracles) lawfully preach, that is, become publick Preachers of the Gospel in the Church or Congregation.

If you mean it in the second Sense, then you must either allow that they have no Right to become publick Preachers of the Gospel, until their Gifts and Talents are examined and approved by the Governours of the Church, and are thereupon regularly admitted to execute that Office, according to the Rules of the Gospel and the Laws and Canons of the Church; or you must intirely give up the twenty-third Article, which enacts and provides, that no Person whatsoever, be his Gifts, Talents, or Endowments ever so great or eminent, shall presume to take upon himself the Of-

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fice of a publick Preacher or Teacher in the Church, until he is so examined and called. So that, in short, your assenting to the Truth of the Article, and declaring that you have no Exception to it, and your allowing mere Laymen, without any publick Call, or Ordination from the Governors of the Church, to take and assume to themselves the Office of publick Preachers of God's Word, are altogether inconsistent, and mutually destroy each other.

As to your exempt Cases, I am sure the Article exempts none; and I could wish you had mentioned some Case, which you believed to be exempted. I know but of one (except the Case of an immediate and direct Call or Mission from God, which I presume your Lay-preachers have the Modesty not to pretend to) which has any Resemblance of an exempt one, and that is, the Case of a Layman's happening into a Country where the Name of Christ is neither known nor acknowledged; and when this shall happen to be the Case with any of them, we shall find no Fault with them to become publick Preachers of the Gospel; but, till then, we must look upon them to be schismatical and sacrilegious Intruders into an Office, to which they have no Manner of Right by any Law of God or Man.

THAT *Paul* and *Barnabas* were designed and set apart for the apostolick Office at large, some time before, I readily grant; but that they were ordained for the Execution of any peculiar or particular Ministry, till Hands were laid upon them by the Prophets, or chief Governors of the Church at *Antioch*, that I deny; for to design and set apart for the Execution of an Office is one Thing, and to be actually ordained and deputed to execute it, is another.

I do suppose, Sir, that your Father designed and set you apart for the Ministry, some time before you were actually ordained a Minister; and it was the very same Case with the twelve original Apostles; they were

were designed and set apart from the rest of his Disciples by our blessed Saviour, and trained up by him for the apostolick Office long before they were actually ordained; for they were not ordained till after our Saviour's Resurrection, when he breathed on them, and said, *Receive the Holy Ghost, ^h whose Sins ye remit, they are remitted;* and again, *as the Father sent me, so I send you;* after which he desired them to stay at *Jerusalem* until this their private (as it were) Ordination was made more publickly authentick, by the visible and miraculous Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. And although I grant that the Rite of imposing Hands was used on other Occasions, as well as Ordination, yet every Circumstance of the Passage under present Consideration, plainly shows, that the Imposition of Hands here mentioned was applied to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, for no other Purpose (the Ceremony of Induction being, I suppose, not quite so antient as the Days of the Apostles) than for ordaining them; for the Discharge of a peculiar Office, for which they had been before designed, and set apart by the Holy Ghost.

IN one Word, tho' *Paul* and *Barnabas* were called and ordained of God, and not of Man or by Men, to be Apostles at large, yet they were ordained, and deputed to the particular Ministry of preaching the Gospel to the *Gentiles* by the Church at *Antioch*.

4. IN your fourth Paragraph you tell me, there are several Questions concerning Diocesan Episcopacy, which, you say, you would be glad to have answered; the first of which is, Where is it prescribed in Scripture? Before I can answer your Set of Questions, I must here again put you in mind of another Omission of yours: In my former Letter to you, I told you, that you yourself having, in your Discourse upon Catholick Spirit, acknowledged that you believed Episcopacy to be both scriptural and apostolical, by which you meant (as you explain yourself in your first Letter)

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^h John xx.

ter) that it was very well agreeing with the Practice and Writings of the Apostles; I told you, I say, that this was equivalent to, and the same Thing with, being prescribed in Scripture; for if it was the Form of Government which the Apostles settled, in all the Churches which they founded, and which they recommended in their Writings, (and if it was not so, pray tell me how could it be, as you confess, agreeable either to their Practice or their Writings) every Man of common Sense and Reason must allow, that this was, in other Words, the same Thing as a scriptural Prescription.

BUT of all this you take no manner of Notice, but, for Reasons good and weighty, you pass it by in profound Silence, and instead of endeavouring to take off the manifest and apparent Inconsistency, between your acknowledging Episcopacy to be very well agreeing with the Practice and Writings of the Apostles, and denying it a scriptural Prescription, or acknowledging your Error and Mistake, you only endeavour to embarrass me with a Set of sophistical Questions, altogether inconsistent with your own express Acknowledgments.

To your first Question therefore, "Where is Episcopacy prescribed in Scripture?" I answer, 1. *Ad hominem*, that if you will tell me where the Change of the *Sabbath* from the last to the first Day of the Week, is prescribed in Scripture, then I will tell you where Episcopacy is prescribed in Scripture also; for either you believe the Change of the *Sabbath* to be prescribed in Scripture, or you do not; if you believe it to be so prescribed, then I defy you to prove it any other way than by its being (as it certainly is) agreeable to the Practice and Writings of the Apostles; if then, according to the Supposition, you believe the Change of the *Sabbath*, at first instituted expressly by God himself to be held on the seventh Day, in Memory of his resting from the Works of Creation on that

that Day, to the first Day of the Week, in Memory of our Lord's rising from the Dead on that Day, to be a scriptural Prescription, and that you neither have, nor indeed can have, any other Authority for so believing, but that Changes being agreeable both to the Practice and Writings of the Apostles, why do you not believe the scriptural Prescription of Episcopacy, for which, according to your own express Acknowledgment, you have the very same Authority? Left the World, as it well may, should conclude that you have some particular Pique to Episcopacy, in denying it a scriptural Prescription, when you allow that Prescription to the Change of the *Sabbath*, upon no other Grounds than (you confess) there is for the scriptural Prescription of Episcopacy.

BUT if you do not believe the scriptural Prescription of the Change of the *Sabbath*, then this Change can have no other Foundation to stand upon, but the Authority and Tradition of the Church prescribing it; and then it is incumbent upon you to tell us, how the Church came by an Authority to change a positive Institution of God, or why her Authority may not extend to all, or any other positive Institution, as well as the *Sabbath*? For to allow the Church, exclusive of the Apostles, any such Authority, is a manifest and a main Principle of Popery, which all Protestants unanimously deny.

2. I ANSWER *ad rem*, that Episcopacy being only the Government of one ruling in chief, or in Superiority over other inferior Church Officers, or Ministers, it is easy to shew where it is prescribed in Scripture: It is prescribed and set down by St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* xii. 28. where the Apostle tells us expressly that God has set in his Church, 1. Apostles, 2. Prophets, 3. Teachers, &c. the plain Meaning of which can be no other, than that God ordered and appointed his Church to be governed by Officers, or Ministers, acting in Superiority one over another, which is the very same

Thing, in other Words, with Episcopacy; for tho' I should grant that Episcopacy or Bishops were not in these express Words or Terms mentioned, or prescribed in Scripture; yet if the Thing meant by both be prescribed in it, as I think it plainly is, in the above Text of *St. Paul*, this must be allowed by all to be abundantly sufficient to my Purpose; for to dispute about Words or Names, when we are agreed as to the Thing, is both childish and ridiculous. But I am under no Necessity to take Advantage of this, because the very Name, Office, and Qualifications of Bishops, in Contradistinction to other inferior Church Officers and Ministers, are mentioned and prescribed in Scripture, as particularly *1 Tim. iii. 1, 2.* where the very Name, Office, and Qualifications of a Bishop are set down and prescribed at large; and *ver. 8.* the Office and Qualification of a Deacon, Minister, or any other inferior Attendant upon, or Assistant to a Bishop, are prescribed and set down: In the Epistle to *Titus c. i. ver. 5.* we are told, that he was left by *St. Paul* in *Crete* to ordain Elders, or Bishops, in every City. That by Elders are meant Bishops, is apparent from *ver. 6, 7.* where the Qualifications of a Bishop (as the Elder which *Titus* was left in *Crete* to ordain) are set down and described. *Timothy* was ordained Bishop of *Ephesus*, the Metropolis of the proconsular *Asia*, by *St. Paul*, with archiepiscopal Inspection over all the other Bishops of that Province; and accordingly *St. Paul* in his first Epistle to him, *c. v. v. 1.* directs him how to behave towards the Bishops and Presbyters of his Province; *Rebuke not,* says the Apostle, *an Elder, or Bishop, but intreat him as a Father, and the younger Men,* that is, according to the learned Doctor *Hammond* on the Text, any inferior Church Officer or Minister, whether Priest or Deacon, *as Brethren.* The same *St. Paul* inscribes his Epistle to the *Philippians* to the Bishops and Deacons, that is, not to the Bishop of *Philippi* alone, but to all the Bishops of that parts,

or

or Province of *Macedonia*, whereof *Pbilippi* was the chief or metropolitan City.

HENCE it appears, that Episcopacy was the Form of Government which St. *Paul* established in that Province, upon its first Conversion to Christianity by his Ministry.

AND as the universal Practice of the Church is the very best Evidence we can possibly have, of that Form of Church Government which was prescribed in Scripture, so we find that Episcopacy was the Form of Church Government which obtained from the very Beginning, as a divine and consequently a scriptural Institution, in all Churches of the Apostles planting; we are as certain as we possibly can be of any Matter of Fact, at so great a Distance of Time, and the most universally and undoubtedly believed by all Mankind.

THAT St. *James* the Brother of our Lord, surnamed *the Just*, was ordained by the Apostles the first Bishop of *Jerusalem*; that St. *Peter* was the first Bishop of *Antioch*; that St. *Mark* was the first Bishop of *Alexandria*; and lastly, that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* were jointly the first Bishops of *Rome*, the one presiding over the *Jewish*, and the other over the *Gentile* Converts of that City. *Eusebius*, and other Church Historians, has left us a Catalogue of all the Bishops that succeeded these original Bishops, in these four great Cities, in a direct Line, all the way down to the first Council of *Nice*; and the Evidence for episcopal Government in all other Churches, as well as these four patriarchal and Mother Churches, both before and since the Council of *Nice*, is unquestionable. *England*, as well as all other Nations, received Episcopacy together with its Christianity, the one was coeval with the other.

LUCIUS the *British*, and probably the first Christian Monarch upon Earth, sent two Bishops on an Embassy to *Rome*, to which *Britain* was then tributary,

tary, and a Province of the *Roman* Empire, above two hundred Years before *Austin* the Monk came to convert the *Saxons*; and the same *Austin*, upon his Arrival in *Britain*, found a regular Church in *England*, under an Arch and other Suffragan Bishops.

LASTLY, I answer, that Episcopacy is founded upon and prescribed by the very Words of our Lord to *St. Peter*, *Matth. xvi. 18. I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven*; upon which Words of our Lord the great and glorious Martyr and Archbishop of *Carthage*, *St. Cyprian*, discourses thus, in his 33d Ep. p. 66. of the *Oxford* Edition: " Our Lord, says he, whose Precepts
 " and Injunctions we ought to dread and obey, pro-
 " viding for the Honour (or Power) of a Bishop, and
 " the Order (or the Frame, Contexture, and Govern-
 " ment) of a Church, speaks thus to *St. Peter* in his
 " Gospel, *I say unto thee, &c.* From hence, through
 " all the Vicissitudes, and Turns of Times and Suc-
 " cessions, the Ordination (not of any one Bishop, as
 " sovereign Monarch over all others, as the Church
 " of *Rome* contends, but) of Bishops in general, and
 " the Order or Frame and Government of a Church
 " is handed down to us; so that the Church is built,
 " not upon any one, but upon the College of Bishops;
 " and all the Administration of the Government of
 " the Church is managed by the same Governors, the
 " Bishops. Seeing therefore that this (that is most
 " plainly the Government of the Church by Bishops)
 " is founded on the DIVINE LAW, it is wonderful
 " to me that some Lapsers should take upon them-
 " selves, with so much Boldness and Rashness, to write
 " to me in the Name of a Church, whereas a Church
 " consists of a BISHOP, his CLERGY, and a faithful
 " or unlapsing Laity."

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THIS is the full Import and Meaning of the Martyr's own Words, (as near as I could render them) which, to prevent cavilling about their Sense and Meaning, I have transcribed at the Bottom^b of the Page.

GIVE me Leave now, Sir, to point out to you the Principles upon which this great and learned Martyr founded the aforesaid Conclusion, which I shall do in the Words of a very learned Advocateⁱ and Confessor for Episcopacy in *Scotland*: 1. That our Lord when he said to *Peter*, *I will give thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, &c. did thereby institute (not the Supremacy of any one over all others, but) the Honour and Power of every Bishop, together with the *Ratio* that is, the Frame, the Contexture, and Government of every Church.

2. That in Virtue of that divine Institution, Disposition, Settlement, or Ordinance of our Lord, there had always been, to that very Day, a Succession of such Bishops.

3. THAT, according to our Lord's Promise to St. *Peter*, all particular Churches had been always built upon their particular Bishops.

4. THAT all those Bishops had always ordered the Discipline, managed the Government, and tempered the Administration of those particular Churches; and that therefore,

5. BY divine Precept; which all Men ought to stand in Awe of and to observe, every one ought to obey the

^b Dominus noster cujus Præcepta metuere et observare debemus, Episcopi honorem et Ecclesiæ Rationem disponens in Evangelio loquitur, et dicit Petro; ego tibi dico quia tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram, &c. inde per Temporum et Successionum Vices, Episcoporum Ordinatio et Ecclesiæ Ratio decurrit, ut Ecclesia super Episcopos constituatur et omnis actus Ecclesiæ, per eosdem Gubernatores Gubernetur. Cum hoc itaque DIVINA LEGE fundatum sit miror quosdam audaci Temeritate, sic mihi scribere voluisse, ut Ecclesiæ Nonine Litteras facerent, quando Ecclesia in Episcopo et Clero et Instantibus Laicis sit constituta.

ⁱ Vide the vindication of the Principles of the *Cyprian Age*. London printed 1701, ch. x. p. 504.

the Power of those particular Bishops, which Power ought to be acknowledged and regarded, by every Member of those particular Churches whereof they are Bishops: And let me add to these Principles, taken from the aforesaid learned Author,

6. THAT by the divine Law, in the Words of our Saviour to St. *Peter*, every Church must consist of a Bishop, his Clergy, and a faithful (or according to St. *Cyprian's* Phrase) a standing Laity, that is, a Laity that fell not from their Christian Profession in time of Persecution.

FROM all which it evidently follows, that Episcopacy is so firmly established upon and prescribed by Scripture, that (at least in St. *Cyprian's* Opinion) No Bishop no Church, is an incontestable Maxim. Hence the same great Saint and Martyr defines the Church to be, *Plebs Episcopo suo adunata*, that is, a Flock closely united and adhering to their Bishop: Hence he every where in his Epistles makes every Bishop the Centre and Principle of Unity to his own Church, to be the *unus Judex vice Christi*, the one Judge instead of Christ, that is, his Vicar to his own Flock, without any visible Superior on Earth. All which Principles, besides their evidently plucking up the Pope's Supremacy from the very Roots, do over and above, necessarily and unavoidably, not only suppose but infer the scriptural, and consequently the divine Right of Episcopacy.

I HAVE insisted on this Evidence for the scriptural Prescription of the Government of the Church by Bishops, not only because it is a sufficient Confutation of what you do in your first Letter, upon the Authority of Dr. *Stillingfleet's Irenicum*, assert, namely, that the Plea for the divine Right of Episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive Church, but also because it is the Evidence of a great, a learned, and holy Martyr, who made a glorious Stand for the Liberties of the Church, and the episcopal College, against the

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Encroachments of the Church of *Rome*, even then appearing in the World; who flourished in the third Century, an Age wherein, by the Consent of all, it is allowed, that the Doctrine, Discipline, and Government of the Church as yet remained sound and uncorrupt, according as they were at first preached, settled, and modelled by the holy Apostles; an Age strictly tenacious of divine and apostolical Institutions, and extremely cautious of the least Variation from them; an Age wherein the extraordinary Manifestations and Illuminations of the Holy Ghost were common and ordinary, many of which were communicated to this holy Martyr upon special Occasions; and finally, an Age wherein they might as certainly know, even by oral Tradition (supposing there were no written Monuments or Records to inform them) what Form of Government the Apostles established in all the Churches which they planted, as we of this Age can know what Form of Government was established or agreed upon in *England* and *Ireland* at the Reformation, it being much about the same Distance of Time from the Death of St. *John* to the Death of St. *Cyprian*, as from the Reformation to our Days.

UPON the whole Matter, I must be very free and plain with you, and therefore must needs say, that you are a Man of very extraordinary and out-of-the-way Principles, first to acknowledge Episcopacy to be scriptural and apostolical, and then to deny that it is prescribed in Scripture; which is just as if one that could not deny Monarchy to be agreeable to the Practice, the Laws, and Constitution of *England*, yet would make it a Matter questionable and disputable, whether it was prescribed by either.

HAVING thus, Sir, answered your first Question largely, and I hope satisfactorily, the rest of your Questions will admit of a quicker Dispatch.

To your second Question, namely, How does it appear that the Apostles established Episcopacy in all the

the Churches which they planted? I answer, 1. That you must allow that it was Episcopacy alone and no other, or Presbytery or Independency alone and no other, which the Apostles established in all the Churches which they planted; or that they established Episcopacy in some and Presbytery or Independency in other Churches: If it was Episcopacy alone, and no other, which they established in all the Churches of their Plantation, how came you to make a Question of it? If it was Presbytery alone, and no other, which they established, then pray, Sir, be pleased to inform me, how can Episcopacy, as you expressly acknowledge, be agreeable either to their Practice or their Writings?

BUT if you say that they established Episcopacy in some, and Presbytery in other Churches, I must still be bold to demand of you, to specify and name the particular Churches in which they established the one, and in which they established the other? Which is a Task that, I presume, upon Reflection, you will not readily undertake to execute; and I shall make a fair Offer, name but any one Church upon the Face of the whole Earth, from the first Foundation of Churches to the Days of *John Calvin*, that was governed by mere Presbyters alone acting in Parity, and I shall most chearfully recant and give up the Argument.

2. I ANSWER, That we have as clear and undoubted Evidence, that it was the episcopal Form of Government alone which the Apostles established in all the Churches which they planted, as we have that the several Books of the New Testament, which go under the Names of their Authors, were really and actually wrote by them; for all the Evidence we have for this last, is the constant, uninterrupted and invariable Tradition of all Ages, from their Times to our Days; but we have the very same constant, uniform, and invariable Tradition, that Episcopacy alone was the Form of Church Government which the Apostles established in all the Churches which they planted; for all those who have handed

handed down to us the Books of the New Testament, as Books wrote by the Authors whose Names they bear, have in like Manner handed down to us Episcopacy, as the Form of Government alone which the Apostles established in all the Churches which they planted: And if you admit the Evidence as good and sufficient in one Case, why not in the other? For where the Evidence is one and the same, for two different Matters of Fact, to admit it in one, and reject it in the other, is absurd and ridiculous.

To your third Question, namely, How does it appear that the Apostles established Episcopacy in any Church, so as to make it of perpetual Obligation? I answer, That Government of some Kind being essentially necessary for the Preservation of the very Being, as well as the Well-being of every Society, and the Church being a Society instituted for the noblest Ends, namely, the Glory of God, and Salvation of Souls; it would be a great Reflection upon the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to suppose that he would not settle it under such a Form of Government as best suited these Ends, and was most conducive towards the attaining of them; and as the Apostles acted by a divine Commission, and under the immediate Influence and Directions of the Holy Ghost, it is not to be questioned but that they did establish Episcopacy as a Form which they knew, and were informed by the Holy Ghost, best suited the Ends of the Institution of the Society, and was most conducive towards attaining of them, and consequently of perpetual Obligation, until some other Set of Men, acting by the same divine Commission, and under the same Influences of the Holy Ghost that they did, shall cancel the Obligation.

PART of your fourth Question being the same in Effect with your second Question needs no other Answer than what was given to it. To the other Part, namely, can we prove the Form which now obtains
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in *England*, to be the same which the Apostles established in all Churches? I answer, That having proved Episcopacy, or the Government of one ruling in chief, or in Superiority over other inferior Church Ministers, to have been the Form which the Apostles established in all Churches, we can easily prove that to be the Form for Substance (though there should be some little Difference or Variation in the outward Mode or Manner of Administration) which now does, and ever has obtained in *England*, because that is a Government of one ruling in chief, or in Superiority over other inferior Church Officers or Ministers.

As to Heresy and Schism, which are the Subjects of your fifth Paragraph, you do not say one Word more, or more to the Purpose, in this, than you did in your first Letter: In Answer to which I told you, that there was a Difference to be observed between the strict Notation of the Word *αἵρεσις* or Heresy, and the ecclesiastical Use of it as a technical Term; that accordingly it was *Vox media*, as I now remember *Grotius* somewhere calls it, that is, a Word which is sometimes taken in an indifferent Sense, and sometimes in a bad Sense; I quoted some Texts of Scripture where it was taken in both these Senses, and particularly one, namely, *2 Pet. ii. 1.* where it is evidently taken for a Denial of an Article of Faith; for the Apostle in that Text speaks of some false Prophets who brought in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord *Jesus* that bought them.

Now whether those false Prophets were the *Gnostic* Hereticks, (according to *Dr. Hammond*) who taught, that it was lawful to deny Christ in Times of Persecution with the Mouth, provided they believed on him in their Hearts; or whether, according to the judicious *Grotius*, they were the *Carpocratian* Hereticks, who denied the Divinity and Eternity of Christ, is no way material; since in either Case it evidently appears from the Text, that Heresy is the Denial of some necessary Article

Article of Faith. Now of this Answer, in my second Letter, you take no manner of Notice, but pass it by in profound Silence. Sir, whether you know it or no, you seem to be admirably well qualified for a Commentator, for I find you can pass by a difficult Passage, with as much Ease and as little Concern as any of the whole Fraternity.

You tell me over again, that in all the Bible Heresy is no where taken for an Error in Fundamentals, or any thing else: To which I answer, that if your Meaning be that it is no where in the Bible said, *Totidem Verbis et Syllabis*, that Heresy is the Denial of an Article of Faith, or an Error in Fundamentals, or any thing else, you do but trifle, and play the Sophister most egregiously: For though it be no where in the Bible, in so many express Words, so said, yet that Heresy is such an Error is evidently colligible from the foregoing Text, where denying the Lord *Jesus* is reckoned among the damnable Heresies, which the false Prophets, there spoken of, endeavoured to introduce into the Church. Now I hope you will allow, that denying the Lord *Jesus*, in any Sense of the Word denying, must be (if not a fundamental) at least some Kind of Error; and if this does not convince you that Heresy is the Denial of, or some Kind of Error concerning an Article of Faith, you must, in my humble Opinion, be plentifully stocked with that for which God has provided no ordinary Remedy, and that is, wilful Obstinacy.

INDEED, the bare and simple Denial of an Article of Faith does not denominate a Man an Heretick; no, nor a simple Error maintained against even a fundamental Point, unless it be maintained with wilful Obstinacy and pertinacious Animosity. Hence the great *St. Austin* used to say, *Errare possum, Hæreticus esse nolo*, I may be mistaken, but will not be an Heretick. The good Man knew he was not infallible, and was therefore subject to Mistakes; but he was resolved not to be

be an Heretick, because he was resolved never to maintain any Opinion with wilful and pertinacious Animosity, but always with a Mind duly disposed, and prepared to receive the Truth, whenever it was sufficiently proposed to him; therefore he lays it down as a Rule, that “ whoever maintains and defends his
 “ Opinion tho’ never so perverse, without any pertinacious Animosity, especially if he was not the first
 “ Author or Broacher of it, but received it by Tradition from his seduced and erroneous Forefathers,
 “ and in the mean time carefully seeks the Truth,
 “ with a Mind duly disposed to receive it whenever
 “ he finds it, is by no Means to be reckoned among
 “ Hereticks.” His Opinion indeed is still (considered in itself) an Heresy, but not so in him, because not maintained with wilful and pertinacious Animosity; just as Poison is still Poison in itself, though some Constitutions may be so strong as to get the better of it; the Man (according to the Language of the Schools) is a material but not a formal Heretick; he maintains the Matter of an Heresy, but he holds not the Formality of it.

You make no more of Schism, in the Scripture Sense, than indulging a little Unkindness of Temper towards our Fellow Christians; and if this be all, it is wonderful and surprizing to me, that the primitive Fathers and Christians should all agree so unanimously in painting it in such black Colours as they do, esteeming ^k it a Sin of almost as black a Character as Murder, Adultery, or even Idolatry, and not to be expiated without Repentance, and an actual forsaking of it, even by Martyrdom; surely they must have looked upon it as something of a more heinous Nature than a little Unkindness of Temper, expressed or indulged towards our Fellow Christians: But the very Import of the Term *Schism* implies a great deal more; for

^k See Dr. *Hammond's* Treatise of Schism, where you will meet with Testimonies of the Ancients to this Purpose in abundance.

for it implies a Rending or Sciffure, a tearing to Pieces; it is, as the great Primate *Bramhal* says, like a Mutiny in an Army, or a Sedition or Rebellion in the State; in a Word, it is an ecclesiastical Sedition, or Rebellion against our spiritual Superiors, and therefore our Church in her excellent Litany, because of their Kindred and near Affinity to each other, next, after *all Sedition, privy Conspiracy, and Rebellion*, directs us to pray for Deliverance *from all false Doctrine, Heresy, and Schism*.

You reject and slight *Phavorinus's* Definition of Heresy, and indeed the Definition of any other, and will, you say, stick to your Bible, as the sixth Article of our Church teaches you. Sir, I perceive where it imports and concerns you most, that you are very regardless of the Articles of the Church, and can easily deviate from them, as in the Case of Lay-preachers and the Doctrine of Regeneration, before observed; but when it avails you nothing, there you would fain be thought very observant of them, as in the Case in hand: For what manner of Affinity or Relation have Articles of Faith, necessary to be believed by all (of which only the sixth Article speaks) with the Definition of a Term? And might you not, without any Prejudice to the Article, allow the Definition of *Phavorinus*, notwithstanding the Article says, and that truly, that Scripture is the only Rule of Articles of Faith necessary to be believed by all. But hast thou appealed to the Bible? to the Bible then let us go.

You say then, that the first Place you meet the Term *Schism* is 1 *Cor.* xiii. 10. and again you meet it c. xi. 18. But it is plain, you say, that in both Places is meant, not any Separation from the Church, but uncharitable Divisions in it; for the *Corinthians* continued still to be one Church, without any Separation of the one from the other, &c. &c. So then it seems that a little Unkindness of Temper towards each

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other, tho' no Violation of external Communion or Solution of Unity should ensue thereupon, is the Scripture Sin of Schism; but if this unkind and uncharitable Temper should end in an open Violation of external Communion, and the Solution of Unity (which the holy Scriptures so earnestly and pathetically recommends among all Members of the Church, which would have been the Effect of the mutual Animosities and Divisions among the *Corinthians*, had not the Apostle seasonably interposed) so that Altar is set up against Altar; then, according to your casuistical Divinity, it ceases to be a Sin, at least it is no more to be called the Scripture Sin of Schism; the plain and evident Consequence of which is, that the further and higher Christians carry their unkind Temper against each other, and the more scandalous and uncharitable the Effects of it are, the less sinful it is; which is such comfortable Doctrine to all our Dissenters, that I dare venture to promise you the hearty Thanks of all Sorts and Sizes of them for it. But because I am one of your old-fashioned Divines, I cannot possibly come into your way of thinking, as to this Particular; for it appears to me, that the Effect must of Necessity partake of the Nature of the Cause that produces it, and that the Branches must be of the same Nature with the Tree from which they grow. Now I am of Opinion, that uncharitable Divisions, and unkindness of Temper in the Church, are the direct and immediate Causes of Separation from the Church, of the Violation of external Communion, and the Solution of Unity, and that consequently these latter are of the same Nature with the former; and therefore if one be evil, and the Scripture Sin of Schism, the other must be the same, that is, in plain Terms, if the Root be bitter, the Branches that sprout from it can never be sweet. Nay, Sir, I am apt to think, that a causeless Separation from a true Church, which necessarily implies the Violation of external Communion, and the

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Dissolution of Unity, is much more schismatical, and consequently more criminal and sinful, than a little unkindness of Temper, and Strife and Contention, which proceeds no farther, and is not attended with the foregoing violent Effects, and in all Reason ought to be deemed Scriptural Schism, rather than the latter, because it is much more opposite to Charity, and more productive and preservative of uncharitable Censures, Rancour and Malice, which are the Things that render all Ruptures, Schisms, Divisions, or Separations, either in or from the Church, so very heinous and criminal in the Sight of God.

You conclude your Account of the scriptural Sense of Heresy and Schism, by saying, they are Sins which, in the modern Sense, the Scripture knows nothing of. Here, Sir, I am somewhat inclined to agree with you, because your Sense of these Sins is the modern Sense; for I dare venture to affirm, that you will find no other Sense of these Terms than what I have assigned, in all the Records or Monuments of antient Times; and, for aught I know to the contrary, never any Divine, before yourself and Mr. *Hofter*, affirmed, that uncharitable Divisions in the Church, or indulging a little unkindness of Temper towards our fellow Christians, was the only Scripture Sin of Schism, and denied that Appellation to a causeless Separation from a true and orthodox Church, when no sinful Term or Condition of Communion is either imposed or required, which is the genuine and natural Consequence and Effect of such Divisions.

BUT notwithstanding this Opinion of yours, you say, you are far from being indifferent as to any Man's Principles in Religion, as appears by your several Writings against Deists, Papists, &c. &c. &c. What you have wrote against this Bead-roll of Sectaries is nothing to the Purpose; though in all the Catalogues of your Writings, which I have seen, I could see no Treatise or Tract of yours on purpose wrote against

any of them; indeed, in some of your Appeals which I have read, I find you charging the Presbyterians and Quakers with degenerating from, and acting contrary to their own original Principles, but very little (if any thing) said in Confutation of these Principles upon which they break off from the established Church: But however that be, all I am at present concerned in is your *Discourse upon Catholick Spirit*, which you made me a Present of, and the Maxim which in your *Plain Account*, &c. you say you laid down to yourself and your Brother, that Orthodoxy was but a very slender, if it may be allowed to be any Part at all of Religion; and whether from both these, and your Defence of them in your Letters to me, it doth not manifestly appear to any impartial and indifferent Judge, that you discoursed and reasoned like one that was quite indifferent as to any Man's religious Sentiments, I leave to the Judgment of all those that either have or shall read that Sermon, or the Letters which passed between you and me upon it; and whether your strange Notions of Heresy and Schism do not administer just Grounds, without any Breach of Charity, to suspect that you are a perfect Latitudinarian in Principle.

I DID not, as you seem to apprehend, charge you with concealing your Sentiments, I only said, that either you were a Latitudinarian, or concealed your Principles to ingratiate yourself with the Dissenters; but then, Sir, you may remember I told you at the same time, that I rather suspected the former than the latter, as one might in Reality be an Error of your Judgment, but the latter being a gross Piece of Hypocrisy, I would not willingly suspect any Man, much less a Brother Clergyman, would be guilty of it.

You say, you need not dispute with many of the Dissenters to know there is no Probability of Success, as you have, you say, found your Father's Words a thousand times true, &c. and so, Sir, you might your
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Grandmother's Words too, if you could remember them; but all this does not excuse your not endeavouring, according to your Opportunities and Abilities, to make them sensible of their Errors, if happily they may be brought to the Acknowledgment of the Truth, that whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, they may know that there was a Prophet among them. I believe if your Father, of whom I have heard a very good Character, were still alive, he would tell you, that after the Concessions you have frankly made, both to Quakers and Presbyterians (the two most considerable Parties among the Dissenters) you should attempt to dispute with them, they would not only out-face and out-lung you, but also out-reason you into the Bargain: For as you maintain the Negative of the scriptural Prescription and perpetual Obligation of Episcopacy, I cannot conceive with what Face or Assurance you could dispute with a Presbyterian about Church Government, which is the most material Difference between them and us, and which gives them the Denomination of Presbyterians; for grant them that Episcopacy is not prescribed in Scripture, and that its Obligation is neither necessary nor perpetual, and there will be a perfect Agreement between you as to that Point of Episcopacy. Neither can I perceive with what better Grace, or Hopes of Success, you could dispute with a Quaker, after declaring publickly, that you look upon Baptism and the Lord's Supper as mere Trifles and Things indifferent, and that you desire the Dispute about them may never come in sight.

BUT, it seems, it was only to humour me, that you graciously condescended to dispute a little with me, but not out of any Hopes of Success, though I should have a single Eye, and did not aim at Victory but at Truth, because, you say, a Man of threescore can hardly, if at all, be convinced, &c. Sir, if you undertook this Debate only to humour me, as if you imagined it were

any sort of Pleasure to me to have any Dispute with you, or any other, you had very little to do, and are greatly mistaken in your Imagination; for I take no Kind of Pleasure in having any Debate with you; and were I influenced only with the Desire of Victory, I would not think the Credit of gaining one over you, (as great a Man as you, or any other, may fancy yourself to be) worth the Labour and Pains it cost me. As to my Age, I believe the Difference between it and yours is not so great, but you may be as incapable of Conviction, as you fancy or imagine me to be on account of my Years; and you may be as sensible of Stiffness and Inflexibility stealing upon your Mind, to put a Bar to all Conviction, as I am or can be. However, be my Years either few or many, I do not think (and I believe every disinterested Person will be of the same Opinion) that you have hitherto advanced any one Argument capable of convincing any one, at any Period of his Life, who has any tolerable Knowledge of the Subjects of our Controversy.

IN your last Paragraph, you say you will add a few Words upon Orthodoxy, because it is of the last Importance, &c. And yet as great as the Importance of it is, you have not added one Grain of Weight more to the Scale in this than you did in your former Letter; you only sing the same Song over again, without ever taking the least Notice of what I wrote to you in my second Letter, in Answer to it; in which I think I did evidently prove, that Orthodoxy was a most necessary and essential Part of Religion, even as necessary as Faith, without which it is impossible to please God; and that by such Arguments as I find you are not able to answer, otherwise I cannot conceive why you did not put in some Kind of Answer to them; but instead of that which was Incumbent on you to do, if it was in your Power, you content yourself only with telling me (as you did before) what you mean by a Child of God, and what by a Child of the Devil; and

and therefore if my Aim was only Victory, I might without giving myself any further Trouble, take my Leave both of you and the Controversy together, and so leave the Reader to judge whether you or I best deserve the Application of your old Man's *Latin* Motto, *Non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris.*

BUT because this Part of our Dispute is indeed, as you say, of the last and greatest Importance, and that my Aim is not Victory, but that Truth may prevail; and especially, because for Want of any other Topicks of Argumentation, you have, in a Manner very unbecoming either a Gentleman, a Scholar, or a Christian, betaken yourself to Scandal and personal Reflection, I am content to continue the Debate a little farther, and to endeavour, if possible, to convince you of the dangerous and pernicious Consequence of this Maxim.

IN your seventh Paragraph, you furnish me with three several Definitions of the Religion of a Child of God, the first is, that it is Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost; secondly, that it is the Love of God and Man, producing all Holiness of Conversation; and lastly, that it is the Mind that was in Christ, and walking as he walked; and of each of these Definitions, you affirm severally and distinctly, that Orthodoxy is but a very slender Part of either, questioning at each Time, whether it be any Part at all of it. But in Answer to this, I must observe, that in all these Definitions, you either artfully, or through an Error, or Mistake of your Judgment, mistake the Fruits and Effects, or Rewards of Religion for Religion itself; for Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, Love of God and Man, strictly and properly speaking, are only the Fruits and Effects of Religion, and differ from it, just as the Conclusion differs from the Principle from whence it is deduced, or the Effect from the Cause.

RELIGION, as I told you in my former Letter, is the entertaining such orthodox Notions and Sentiments of the Supreme Being, his Nature, Attributes, and Words, as produce those Fruits and Effects in us, which you mistake and confound with Religion itself; and it does as naturally do so in every one *Obicem non ponente*, that does not put a Bar to it, by the Depravity of his own corrupt Will and Affections; as a Tree brings forth its natural Fruit, if no Injury of Weather, or an unnatural Season, prevents or obstructs it. So that the entertaining of sound and orthodox Sentiments of the Nature, Attributes, and Word of God, is the very Soul and Foundation of all Religion, which produces those Fruits and Effects of it mentioned by you, in every one that does not put a Bar to it, by the Depravity of his own corrupt Will and Affections; and consequently Orthodoxy is a most necessary and essential Part of Religion, without which we cannot have those Effects of it, mistaken by you for Religion itself. As for Instance, what Peace or Joy could you have in the Holy Ghost, if you had not a right Belief of his Nature, Person, or Office? Suppose you were an Eunomian, or Socinian Heretick, what Joy or Comfort could you have in the Holy Ghost, if with the first you believed him to be a mere Creature, or with the last to be only a Quality of the Divine Nature, without any personal Substance? How could you love, fear, or serve God, in a way suitable to his Will and Word, if you entertained wrong Notions, either of Himself, his Attributes, his Purposes or Decrees? Suppose a rigid Calvinist who believes absolute and unconditional Predestination and Reprobation, how could such an one have a cordial Love for him? fear him, I grant, he might as a cruel Tyrant, who without any other Motive, but his own mere Will and Pleasure, and to shew his Power, did from all Eternity, without any Regard to their good or bad Actions, irreversibly and irrevocably doom

doom the greatest Part of his Creatures, to eternal Damnation. So that you see, Sir, that orthodox Sentiments are the very Soul and prolifick Principle of all Religion, without which we can neither love, fear, or serve God as we should do, and consequently, that Orthodoxy is a most necessary and essential Part of Religion.

By a Child of the Devil, you say, you mean one that neither loves, fears, or serves God, yet such a Man may be orthodox, and entertain true Opinions; and yet it is equally certain, that these can be no Parts of Religion, in him that has no Religion at all. I wish, Sir, you would forget your Sophistry, and not endeavour, by such Sophisms to impose upon yourself or others; for this Argument of yours proceeds, as the Logicians speak, *a dicto Simpliciter, ad Dictum secundum Quid*, which you that either are, or sometimes were a Fellow of *Oxford*, must know to be false Reasoning, that is in plain *English*, when the Question between you and me is, Whether Orthodoxy, simply and absolutely without any Respect or Relation to this or that Person, of this or that Qualification, be a Part of Religion you endeavour to prove, that it is not, because it is no Part of it in him that has no Religion at all; than which there cannot well be a more fallacious Piece of Sophistry. But, Sir, tho' a Child of the Devil has not the Fruits and Effects of Religion, that is, tho' his Orthodoxy does not produce the saving Love and Fear of God in him, because he puts a Bar to it by the Depravity of his corrupt Will and Affections, why may it not be in itself really and truly a most necessary Part of Religion, as Faith tho' it does not in all Men operate by Love, is yet a necessary Part of Religion, tho' to him of no Use or Advantage, because it doth not produce in him those Effects and Fruits of Religion which you mention; for as Reason is indisputably essential to Man, tho' natural Idiots, or Madmen have not the Use of it; so
Orthodoxy,

Orthodoxy, or right believing, is essential to Religion, tho' a Child of the Devil puts a Bar to its Influences by the Depravity of his corrupt Will and Affections.

IN the Close of your Letter, you crave Permission to speak exceeding plainly, and, to do you Justice, you do so to a very great Degree of Scurrility, and in a manner unbecoming your Character. You suppose then that I may be very orthodox, and yet possibly I may have no more Religion than the Devil or his Angels, if it be true that I frequently drink to Excess, and that in my Passion I call my Brother a Fool, and take God's Name in vain. But, Sir, what if, instead of being true, all this be scandalously and notoriously false, what manner of Man must the World take you to be, thus (even hypothetically) to asperse a Brother Clergyman, of whom and with whom you had no sort of personal Knowledge or Acquaintance, to intitle you, with any Assurance of Truth, to charge him with such Immoralities? and consequently for which you could have no other Authority, but the false Information of some of your Disciples, who for the Opposition I gave them, would not scruple to make Mountains of Mole-Hills, and improve the most innocent Liberty, into an immoral Crime? Suppose, Sir, I could prevail with myself to follow the Example you have set me, and to give you a Yard of your own Measure, and tell you, that tho' you never drank any thing but Water, and never in Passion or otherwise took God's Name in vain, yet it is possible (according to your own way of reasoning) you may have no more Religion than the Devil or his Angels, if it be true, that having inveigled a young Lady with fourteen thousand Pounds fortune to marry you, you in a little Time quitted and turned her off, giving her only four thousand Pounds of her Fortune, reserving the rest for charitable Uses, upon Pretence that the married State was incompatible with the Discharge of the Apostolick

Apostolick Mission, which you took upon yourself; that you afterwards lived in Adultery with another Man's Wife, and that even when you were last in this Kingdom, you carried off considerable Sums of Money that were collected in your Societies in *Dublin*, for charitable Uses among themselves: Suppose, I say, I should return upon you in this Manner, (tho' I have heard all these things reported of you) would not you, and very justly, think me a very bad Man and that I had done you a very great Injury? I do not hint these Things as having any moral Assurance of the Truth of them, but to let you see how an innocent Man (as in Charity I will suppose you are) may very often be causelessly injured in his Reputation by malicious People; and that you ought to have considered that this might be my Case, as I can prove it to be, before you either directly or indirectly exhibited such a Charge against a Brother Clergyman, founded only on groundless Hearsay or Report, which is doing that to me, which I appeal to your own Conscience, whether you would not take it very ill in me if I did (as you seem to do in your Letter) seriously exhibit the above Charge against you; which is so far from being either Bible, or traditionary, or any kind of Christianity, that it is not so much as common Honesty, or even Heathenish Morality.

In the mean time, I am surprized that you who set up so much for what you call Bible Christianity, should forget that Precept of our Lord, *Judge¹ not and you shall not be judged, condemn not and you shall not be condemned, for with the same Measure you mete to others, it shall be measured to you again*; or that you did not reflect how contrary to St. *Paul's* ² Description of the Christian Grace of Charity it is, even to think, how much more to speak, Evil of our Brother? and that the same St. *Paul*, in his pastoral Instructions to *Titus*, desires he may put the People, under his Care and Inspection,

¹ *Matth.* vii. 1, 2. ² *1. Cor.* xiii. 5.

spection, in mind to speak^a evil of no Man; and let me entreat you to read Doctor *Tillotson's* excellent Discourse on the last quoted Text of St. Paul, in hopes it may prevent your being guilty of such another uncharitable Crime again. And because I am unwilling to be in your Debt, for any of your Civilities, or any Instance of your Brotherly Love, as you have very uncharitably and unjustly, (because you did it without any Knowledge of your own) applied the Words of *David* to me, so you must pardon me if I very justly, because I have a pregnant Demonstration of it lying before me on the Table, apply the words of a greater than *David* to you, *Else how canst thou say to thy Brother, Brother let me take the Mote out of thy Eye, when thou seest not the Beam that is in thine own Eye. THOU HYPOCRITE, first cast out the Beam that is in thine own Eye, and then shalt thou clearly see to take out the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye.* You cry out with an Exclamation, what an idle Thing is it in me to talk of Lay-preachers, for is not a Lay-preacher preferable to a drunken, &c. Preacher? But without any Exclamation, let me ask you calmly, whether it be not more idle, more senseless, and indeed more uncharitable in you to be making odious Comparisons, when the Question is not which is preferable, but when the Question is, Whether a Layman, without any direct or special Call from Heaven, or a legal Mission from the Governors of the Church, may lawfully take upon himself the Office of a publick Preacher of God's Word in the Church; and whether your allowing such Preachers, be consistent with your Acknowledgement, that you have no Exception to the twenty-third Article, which condemns them. To clear this Inconsistency was what you ought to have done, if you could, and not make odious Comparisons, which, however true, are nothing to the Purpose; for tho' a sober Layman is a better Man than an intemperate (tho'

^a *Tit. iii. 2.*

(tho' never so well authoris'd) Preacher, yet it does not therefore follow, that a mere Layman may lawfully presume to be a publick Preacher of God's Word in the Church.

IN the mean time, as to myself, let me be as I will, to my own Master I stand or fall; neither do I regard being judged by you or any other, so long as my own Conscience acquits me; and I do assure you, Sir, that I had much rather take my Chance with the poor Publican in the Parable, who went to the Temple to pray with a Pharisee, and would not so much as lift up his Eyes to Heaven, but smiting his Breast cried, *God be merciful to me a Sinner*, than with any Pharisee, whether Jewish or Christian, who boasts of his own Righteousness, and not only despises, but also falsely accuses and uncharitably censures others.

AFTER all, whatever (in your great Charity) you may think of me, I thank God I have so much Christianity, that I can with all Sincerity say the Lord's Prayer, and beg Forgiveness of my Sins, which I am not ashamed to confess, upon no other Terms, than as I heartily forgive both you and your Informer, whoever he was, the Scandal you have endeavoured to fix upon me. And so, Sir, I take my Leave of you and this Dispute together; for once an Adversary betakes himself to Scandal and personal Reflection, I am resolv'd to have no farther Dealing or Correspondence with him, since, in my humble Opinion, there can hardly be any greater Sign of a bad Cause or a bad Man, or indeed of both together, than such a poor, unmanly, and unchristian Behaviour. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Hollymount,
Sept. 30th,
1756.

Yours, &c.

J. C.

AN



AN APPENDIX
TO
MONTANUS REDIVIVUS:

Being REMARKS upon the Revd. Mr. SHIRLEY,
Rector of LOUGHREA, his late Sermon on the
Ministry of the Gospel, in a Letter to the Revd.
Dean CROWE, by the Author of MONTANUS, &c.

Reverend and Worthy Sir,



WHEN I received your Favour, with Mr. *Shirley's* late Sermon, on the Ministry of the Gospel, enclosed, I remember, that in Answer, I hinted, or rather promised, that I would give you my Sentiments and Opinion of it; and altho' upon a careful Perusal of it, I found nothing equal to the mighty Brags that were made of it, before it made its publick Appearance, by his late Swadling Friends, in these Parts, nor indeed deserving much Consideration; yet lest you should think me deficient in all my Promises, as I have been in that which I have been a long Time making, to do myself the Honour and Pleasure of seeing you, from fulfilling which I have been hitherto, by my bad State of Health, and other unfortunate Accidents, prevented; I have presumed to give you this Trouble, together with my Opinion of that Sermon, which I take to be in the general, full fraught with unsound and heterodox Notions,
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and with very false, scandalous, and uncharitable Aspersions, (not indeed fairly and above board, but by many broad Hints, and indirect Insinuations) cast upon his Brethren the Clergy.

IF the Characters which his late Friends, the Swadlers in this Country, industriously spread abroad of him, both before and since his Conversion, and going over to their Party, (tho' very probably both for obvious Reasons are exaggerated beyond the Bounds of Truth) have any Truth in them, he has verified the Observation of the Poet, viz. *In vitium ducit Culpa Fuga, si caret Arte*. And he does not seem to understand, or at least he had not an Eye to, that other excellent Maxim in Morality of the same Poet; *Virtus est Medium Vitiatorum, utrinque reductum*; he has, I say, quite forgot these, and, like his present Masters, Mr. W---y, &c. he carries all Things to Extremes, and strains every String he handles, till it cracks. I will not deny but he may be zealously affected, but whether well, let the Consequence determine. To be zealously affected in a good Cause is, I grant, very commendable; but when Zeal is not tempered and guided by Moderation, Solidity of Judgment, and Coolness of Thought, it is of a very pernicious and dangerous Consequence, and degenerates into Superstition, Enthusiasm, and Uncharitableness.

IT is really surprizing to consider, with what Earnestness, and Application these Men apply themselves, and what Pains they take, to run down and depreciate Christian Morality, or the Works of Evangelical Obedience; and preaching Justification by Faith alone, without any such Works, as if the whole of Christianity depended upon it; thus putting those Things asunder, which God has inseparably joined together. It is for this Reason they have put that excellent Book, *The Whole Duty of Man*, under an *Judex expurgatorius*, and interdicted the reading of it in their Societies; because he exhorts us to live soberly, righteously

ly and godlily in this World; whereas (says Mr. *Whitfield*, in his printed Sermon on the Seed of the Woman) Men should not be desired or exhorted to do this or that, but to lay hold on the Righteousness of Christ by Faith, which will be thereupon imputed to them, and will be sufficient, tho' they have no sort of Righteousness of their own; to depend upon which, in Whole or in Part, either as the Cause, or any Term or Condition of Salvation, that Gentleman declares to be no less than Hell-fire and Damnation.

TOWARDS carrying on this blessed Design, Mr. *Shirley* has contributed his Mite, in the Sermon under present Consideration, the main and principal Design of which, is to prove, that preaching Morality, or the Works of Evangelical Obedience, is not preaching the Gospel, condemning his Brethren that do preach Morality, and falsely accusing them, that they preach nothing else. Now if by the Gospel, he means the whole Gospel, I grant that to preach Morality alone, is not to preach the Gospel; but if his meaning be, that to preach Morality is to preach no Part of the Gospel, I affirm it to be a most false, erroneous, and dangerous Assertion; for it is evidently, to preach a very considerable and fundamental Part of the Gospel; it is to preach the End and Design of it, as old *Zachary*, the Father of *John Baptist*, has long ago told us; for he, by the Holy Ghost, assures us, that we were, by the Birth, and Incarnation of Christ, delivered and redeemed from the Hands of our Enemies, both Temporal and Spiritual, that we might from thence forward serve God in *Righteousness*, and *Holiness*, before him all the Days of our Lives, *Luke* i. 74, 75, *St. Paul* tells us the same, for Christ, says he, gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar, or chosen, or precious People, zealous of *Good Works*: *Tit.* ii. 14. Therefore, instead of finding Fault with, I humbly presume, that Mr. *Shirley* should have highly honoured and

and esteemed, such of his Brethren, as make it their principal Study to preach true Christian Morality, and a good Life; because this is the End and Design of all Religion, especially as they are not wanting or deficient, as Occasion and Opportunity offer, to preach Faith in Christ, the Necessity of Grace, Regeneration, and the Aids and Assistance of the Spirit, in the due Use of the ordinary Means of Grace, and all other Mysteries of the Gospel. They do not, it is true, neither is there any Reason or Necessity that they should, make these the constant and perpetual Themes or Subjects of their Discourses, as others do; for this would be to suppose that they were always preaching to *Jews, Heathens, or Mabometans*; it would be to suppose that they were to be constantly laying the Foundation, and never endeavour to raise any Superstructure upon it; and, in a Word, it would be to suppose, that the Gospel was still in a State of Publication to an Infidel and Pagan World.

THE Clergy, I suppose, take it for granted, that their Hearers have been grounded in the Knowledge and Belief of the Mysteries, and Principles of Faith, and trained up in them from their Infancy, both by their Parents, Tutors, and Pastors; and consequently, that their chiefest Care or Concern is, or ought to be, to perswade and exhort them to bring forth Fruits answerable to such Mysteries and Principles, in all holy and godly Conversations; in Love and Charity; in Justice, Temperance, Sobriety, and Chastity; in Meekness, Purity, and Humility; in Patience under Afflictions; an intire Resignation of ourselves to the Divine Will and Providence; and a chearful Acquiescence in all the gracious Dispensations of the latter, believing and firmly perswading ourselves, that all Things, whether in Life or Death, in Adversity or Prosperity, however chequered or blended together, or whatever our Lot or Portion of any or either of them may be, will in the Conclusion, and in winding up of

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the Bottom, turn out to the Benefit and Advantage, of all those that sincerely and heartily love and fear God. And in preaching these Things, the Clergy do but follow the Example of their Divine Lord and Master, and of his Holy Apostles. When our Saviour sent forth his Apostles upon their first Mission, this was what he gave them in Charge, *Go, says he, and preach the Gospel in every City*; but what Gospel? Why, not Faith alone without Works, but *repent and believe the Gospel, and repent for the Kingdom of Heaven*, (that is the State of the Gospel) *is at hand*. First repent, which is not a single transient Act, but a complex Body of several, if not all, good Works, and then *believe the Gospel*.

THE first Sermon (at least so far as appears from any written Records) that our Saviour himself ever preached was that on the *Mount of Olives*; the whole intire Subject of which, from Beginning to Ending, is nothing else but Morality, raised to its highest Pitch of Perfection, and restored to its primitive, and original Force, Purity and Obligation; extending the latter to the very Heart and Soul, to the inmost Thoughts, Desires, and Affections of Men; not terminating it on the outward or external Behaviour only, as the Heathen Philosophers and the Scribes and Pharisees usually did. There is not one Word in all that Divine Sermon, concerning Justification by Faith alone, without the Works of Evangelical Obedience, in the Propagation and Maintenance of which Doctrine, Mr. *Wesley* is so zealously sanguine, that no Justification, in his Sense, and no Christianity, are with him almost Terms convertible and equivalent. Neither was it in this Sermon alone, that our Saviour insists upon, and preaches Morality; to the contrary, the enforcing and recommending of it, is the moral Design of almost all his Parables, particularly the Parable of the Sower that went out to sow his Seed; the prodigal Son; of the unfruitful Fig-tree, and many others.

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In a Word, he makes Morality, or the Works of Evangelical Obedience, the only Test and Evidence of our Love and Gratitude to himself; *If ye love me,* says he, *keep my Commandments,* *John* xiv. 15. and again, *Ye are my Friends if ye do whatsoever I command you,* *John* xv. 14. nay he reckons such to be his nearest and dearest Relations; for being upon a certain Time told, that his Mother and his Brethren were at the Door desiring to speak with him, *Who,* says he, *are my Mother and my Brethren?* then looking round, and pointing to his obedient Disciples, *Behold,* says he, *my Mother and my Brethren, for whosoever doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my Mother, my Brethren and my Sister,* *Mark* iii. 30. 31. &c. To conclude, he reckons all other pretences to Religion to be nothing else but meer Hypocrisy, and tells us, that he will not regard the Prophefying in his Name, and casting out Devils, at the last Day, without the Works of Evangelical Obedience, for he will answer them, *Depart from me for I know you not, ye Workers of Iniquity.*

AND it was the same Case with his holy Apostles, in their Epistles to the Churches, or to single Persons; for tho' the Attempts of open and barefaced Hereticks, and the sly and more plausible Pretences of cunning Deceivers, who came in Sheep's Cloathing, with great Pretences to Mysteries, and deep Speculations, with great Mortification and outward Shows of Devotion, in order the more successfully to deceive silly and unstable Souls, made it necessary for them to guard the Faithful against such Hereticks, and Deceivers, and to confirm the genuine Doctrines, Articles, and Mysteries of the Faith against them; yet they generally close their Epistles with an earnest and pathetick Exhortation to the Performance of the Works of evangelical Obedience, and all the Virtues of a social Life, whether publick or private. It would be as needless as endless to produce all the In-

stances to this Purpose, to be met with in their Epistles; every one that has or will read them, will be convinced of the Truth of it. “ If preaching the Gospel, “ says Mr. *Sbirley*, consisted in preaching the moral “ Law, I cannot see what Reason St. *Paul* had to suppose, that any Shame would be fixed on it, especially at *Rome*, &c.” If preaching the Gospel consisted in preaching Morality or the moral Law only, and in nothing else, possibly St. *Paul* would not have been so apprehensive of being subjected to Shame on account of it, either at *Rome* or elsewhere, as he was; but no Man ever yet pretended that preaching the moral Law was preaching the whole Gospel, tho’ the Gospel cannot be preached without it: But there were other Things which made the Apostle justly apprehensive of being exposed to Scorn and Contempt, by the wise Men of *Rome*, as he had been already by the Philosophers at *Athens*, namely, preaching *Jesus*, and the Resurrection: The preaching of a crucified *Messias*, was to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and a Rock of Offence; they expected a warlike *Messias* to fight their Battles, to free them from their Bondage and Subjection to the Power of the *Romans*, to subdue the whole World under them, and make *Jerusalem* its Metropolis; it could never enter into their Heads, that a *Messias* who declared, that his *Kingdom was not of this World*, and that suffered himself to be crucified by the *Romans*, could do all this for them, or consequently could be the true one; and therefore they were inseparably prejudiced against him. It is well known also, what Scorn and Contempt the Christians were every where loaded with, for worshipping and making a God of a *Galilean*, (so *Julian the Apostate* in Derision used to call our Saviour,) who was crucified; (the most infamous and ignominious of all Punishments, both among *Jews* and *Romans*,) this was what the Apostle had Reason to expect would be, at every Turn cast in his Teeth, by the wise and learned Men

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of *Rome*, as Matter of Shame and Reproach, and of which he declares himself not to be one Bit ashamed; to the contrary, it was what he gloried in, and in nothing else; *God forbid*, says he, *that I should glory in any thing save in the Cross of Christ, by whom the World is crucified to me and I to the World*: Galat. vi. 14. Neither was it for preaching a crucified Saviour alone, that St. *Paul* had Reason to apprehend he should be loaded with Scorn and Contempt at *Rome*, but even for preaching Morality in that Height and Strictness, in that Purity and Spirituality, to which Christ raised it in his Sermon on the Mount, to which the greatest Moralists among *Jews* or *Barbarians*, *Greeks* or *Romans*, were utter and intire Strangers: They could not conceive that causeless Anger, Wrath, Malice, or Desire of Revenge, were Species of Murder; they had no Notion or Idea of the Adultery of the Heart or the Eyes; their Morality carried them no farther than to love their Friends, but allowed them to hate their Enemies; therefore the loving their Enemies, doing all the Good they could to them, and even praying for them, which is the Morality of the Christian Dispensation, could not but appear strange and unaccountable to the wisest Sages of *Greece* or *Rome*; and therefore St. *Paul* had no less than Reason to apprehend he should be the Butt of their Scorn and Derision, even for preaching such Morality.

IN a Word, as the great Dr. *Stillingsfleet*, in a Sermon upon this very Text of Mr. *Shirley's*, and out of which it had been no Shame or Disparagement to him, to have scribbled somewhat, observes, “ Had Christ
 “ come *μετα πολλης φαυλισιας* with great Pomp and
 “ State into the World, subduing Kingdoms
 “ and Nations under him; had St. *Paul* been a
 “ General for the Gospel, instead of an Apostle of it,
 “ the great Men of the World would have acknow-
 “ ledged, that he had no Reason to be ashamed, either
 “ of his Master, or his Employment under him: But

“ to preach a crucified Lord and Saviour, among the
 “ Glories and Triumphs of *Rome*; and a Doctrine of
 “ so much Humility, Simplicity, and Contempt of
 “ the World, among those who were Masters of it,
 “ and ruled it with such Policy and Art; to persuade
 “ those to be Followers of Christ, and to imitate him
 “ in the Innocence and Holiness of his Life, who
 “ could not be like the Gods they ever had, and still
 “ worshipped, without being guilty of the greatest
 “ Crimes, and the grossest Immoralities, was likely
 “ to be an Employment, liable not only to such Scorn
 “ and Contempt, but even to the most imminent
 “ Danger and Hazard of his Life; that no one but
 “ a Man of a great, courageous, and undaunted Spi-
 “ rit, would ever venture to undertake it.”

“ THE very word Gospel, says Mr. *Shirley*, re-
 “ minds us of its proper Object, as the Meaning of it
 “ is the good Message or good News, &c. Pag. 6.”
 Mr. *Shirley* either mistakes, or over-looks the literal No-
 tation of the word *Gospel*, by which our *English* Tran-
 slators have expressed the Import, but not the literal
 Notation of the Word *εὐαγγέλιον* in *Greek*, and *E-*
vangelium in *Latin*, which I grant literally signifies,
 as Mr. *Shirley* observes, good Message or News; or
 rather, as the Angels which appeared to the Shepherds
 in the Land of *Judæa*, at our Saviour's Nativity ex-
 press it, *Tidings of great Joy which should be to all*
Nations; for the Word Gospel is an old *Saxon* word
 (*Goddspell*) made *English*, and signifies literally God's
 Word; our *English* Translation therefore properly
 enough renders the *Greek* *εὐαγγέλιον* or good Message,
 by the word Gospel or God's Word, because all the
 Particulars of this joyful Message, or good News, all
 its Promises, all its Threatenings, and all its Doctrines,
 Precepts, and Duties, whether of Faith or Practice,
 are really God's Word; for it is not a Message of one
 but many Particulars, and all these Particulars are to
 be preached, according to their different Degrees of
 Necessity,

Necessity, Usefulness, and Subserviency, one to another; and none of them to be urged, or neglected, to the manifest Prejudice or Neglect of another: we are to declare and publish the whole Message, and to deliver the whole Council of Heaven concerning Man's Salvation, so far as it appears to us to have been revealed; otherwise we shall be reckoned unfaithful Stewards and Dispersers of the Word of God.

I WILL put a plain and parallel Case. Let us suppose a City in open Rebellion against their lawful Sovereign, and that this Sovereign, at the Solicitation of his Son and Heir, sends Embassadors or Heralds to the Citizens with a gracious Message, that if they laid down their Arms, and returned to their Allegiance, he would forgive, and not take the Forfeiture of what was past, upon Condition that they did for the future honour his Son as they did himself, and make all their Addressees thro' him, and pay a yearly Tax, towards the Payment of which, he would give them all the necessary Aids and Encouragement, and make all reasonable and equitable Allowances for Contingencies and Neglects that were not habitual or voluntarily persisted in: Now if these Embassadors or Heralds should only deliver the first Part of the Message, and conceal the other, *i. e.* the Payment of the Tax, or seldom mention it, and when they did, but very slightly, as a thing no way necessary or obligatory towards obtaining their Prince's Amnesty, or the Continuance of it, &c. they would, I confess, bring very acceptable News to the Citizens, but I doubt not a true one, and consequently might be justly charged with Unfaithfulness in discharging the Trust that was reposed in them. The Application of this supposed Case, to the Case in Hand, is so obvious, that it is needless to enlarge farther upon it. " Now, says Mr. Shirley, if any Minister of God's Word should come to you, and set before you the pure and perfect Law of Righteousness, an intire and perfect Obedience which can alone intitle you to everlasting Salva-

“ tion, &c. If any one should represent your moral
 “ Duty to you in this true Light, and at the same
 “ time not represent unto you the supernatural Pow-
 “ ers and Privileges offered to you in the Gospel, to
 “ enable you to perform the same perfectly, instead of
 “ good he would bring very bad News to the Ears of
 “ Flesh and Blood, &c.” *Ibid. ubi supra.*

MR. *Shirley*, in the Advertisement before his printed Sermon, declares, that he has not joined himself to any Sect or Party, but adheres to the Tenets of the Church of *Ireland*, and endeavours to preach them in their primitive Purity, and so indeed say they all; nay, they do with great Confidence and Assurance pretend, that they are the only true Preachers of the Doctrines; but I may justly say, *Ut quid verba audiam quum facta videam?* For these Pretences and Declarations are evidently nothing else but so many Protestations against plain Facts; and for Proof of this, I need go no farther than the above Paragraph of Mr. *Shirley*'s Sermon, wherein he most evidently forsakes the Doctrine of the Church, and joins himself with the Swadlers, (if holding and maintaining their peculiar Doctrines, as Swadlers, may be deemed joining with them) for he therein manifestly pleads for a sinless and perfect Obedience to the Law of Righteousness, in its full Extent, as necessary to everlasting Salvation; that is, in a Word, he pleads for sinless Perfection, which is a main and fundamental Principle of Methodism, a Tenet which flies directly in the Face of several Texts of Scripture, and is confuted by the Lives of the greatest Saints that ever were upon the Face of the Earth, under any Dispensation or Oeconomy of God's Church, whether patriarchal, *Mosaic*, or evangelical. *Enoch, Noab, Job, Abraham* the Father of the Faithful, *Moses, Daniel, David, Zacharias* the Father of the Baptist, the Apostles *Peter, Paul, Barnabas, &c.* of all these, I say, the Oracles of Truth bear Witness, that they had their Failings,
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Infirmities, and Imperfections, and came far short of a sinless Perfection. In a Word, it is a Tenet of the Pelagian Heresy, against which all the antient Fathers and Councils that opposed that Heresy, have borne Testimony; and our own excellent Church of *Ireland*, following their Example, has clearly expressed and declared herself against it; for in the 15th Article of the Church of *England*, which she hath in her Canons adopted as her Sense and Judgment, the Title of which is, *Christ alone without Sin*, after establishing the sinless Perfection and spotless Innocence of our Saviour, she expresses herself in these very Words, “ But
 “ all the rest (tho’ baptised and born again in Christ)
 “ yet offend in many Things; and if we say that we
 “ have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth
 “ is not in us.”

Now it is plain from the foregoing Paragraph, that Mr. *Shirley* supposes, or rather affirms, that we not only may, but are obliged to obey the Law of Righteousness perfectly, and consequently not only may, but must attain a sinless Perfection, in order to intitle us to everlasting Happiness; which is quite blank against the above Article of our Church; and then let the World judge how faithfully he adheres to and preaches her Tenets. And to show his Meaning more plainly he quotes some Texts of Scripture, to prove that we must obey the Law of Righteousness perfectly, or with a sinless Perfection; the first Text is, that *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*. But is it not amazing to hear Mr. *Shirley*, in the very Face of this Text, affirming, that preaching Morality is not preaching the Gospel, and tacitly condemning his Brethren that do so? For I would fain know from him, what is Holiness but Christian Morality, I mean Faith, Hope, Charity, Justice, Temperance, Chastity, Purity, and Devotion, &c. and since *without Holiness*, the Apostle is positive, *no Man shall see the Lord*, what can be more necessary, or more the constant
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Endeavours of the Ministers of God's Word, at all Times and upon all Occasions, than to preach and recommend to their Hearers the above Works of Christian Morality.

BUT to return to the Text: To which I answer, that without Holiness in Heart, in Desire and Affection, and in the Habit and main and principal Course and Tenour of our Lives, so as that it be the prevailing and predominant Principle of them, we neither can nor shall see the Lord: But without a perfect, spotless, and sinless Holiness in every possible Instance and Degree, we may and shall, through the Grace and Mercy of God in and through Christ, see the Lord, otherwise no Man living ever was or can be saved; for no Man ever did or ever will attain to such a Degree of perfect Holiness in this Life (the Son of God in our Nature only excepted, whose peculiar Prerogative and Privilege it was, above all the Sons of *Adam*, to be perfectly holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners) and therefore no Man may, without sacrilegious Blasphemy, assume that Privilege and Prerogative to himself. It is therefore no way inconsistent with that Holiness required from us, in order to intitle us to the Vision of God, that we do sometimes through Ignorance, Infirmary, or Surprize, deviate from the Perfection of Obedience to the Law of Righteousness, provided it be, as soon as recollected or perceived, immediately confessed and repented of, if otherwise in the main Habit and Course of our Lives we be holy and righteous, otherwise to what Purpose is Repentance? Or does Mr. *Shirley*, with the *Novatians*, allow but of one Repentance, before Baptism or the Reception of the Holy Ghost? Or let him tell us why the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was instituted, as for other Ends and Purposes, so especially for the Renewal of our Baptifinal Covenant, if it was not that our Lord saw we could not attain to a sinless Perfection, in a Way consistent with the Freedom of
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our Wills and the Liberty of our Elections ; and therefore he graciously allowed us the Benefit of Repentance, and the Privilege of renewing our Baptifmal Covenant in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharift ; all which plainly fupposes, or rather neceffarily infers, that as God faw we could not attain, fo he neither expects or requires a finlefs Perfection of Obedience to the Law of Righteoufnefs from us.

LASTLY, I would ask Mr. *Shirley* why our Saviour commanded us to pray for daily Remiffion of our Sins, as well as for our daily Bread, if he did not fee that we fhould have daily Need of the one as well and as much as of the other ; and confequently that we neither could attain to, nor did he expect or require a finlefs Perfection of Obedience from us. This brings to my Mind a beautiful Passage out of St. *Auftin*, in 31 *Serm. de Verb. Apoft.* “ Hæretici Pelagiani et Cælefti-
 “ ani dicunt Juftos in hac Vita peccatum non habere,
 “ redi, Hæretice, ad Orationem Dominicam dimitte
 “ nobis debita noftra, &c.” “ The Pelagian and
 “ Cæleftinian Hereticks (fays the Father) do fay, that
 “ the Juft in this Life do not fin ; turn, thou Here-
 “ tick to that Petition in the Lord’s Prayer, *Forgive*
 “ *us our Trefpaffes*, &c. Dost thou repeat this Peti-
 “ tion, or dost thou not ? If thou dost, confefs thy-
 “ felf a Sinner ; if not, then though thou art bodily
 “ præfent with the Church, yet in Spirit thou art
 “ *foris*, that is, out of and separated from her Com-
 “ munion, *hæc enim eft Oratio Ecclefiæ Vox a Magifte-*
 “ *rio Domini veniens*, &c. for this is the Prayer of the
 “ Church, it comes from the Authority of our Lord,
 “ *Ipfè dixit fic orate*, he himfelf faid, *After this Man-*
 “ *ner pray ye ; dixit Difcipulis, dixit Apoftolis*, &c. he
 “ faid it to his Difciples, he faid it to his Apoftles ;
 “ *dixit nobis (qualefcunque fumus) Agnunculis* ; he faid
 “ it to us little Lambs, of what Quality foever we
 “ are ; *dixit Arietibus* ; he faid it to the Rams, that is,
 “ to the Bifhops or Leaders of the Flock ; *videte*
 “ *igitur*

“ igitur quis et quibus dixit, *Veritas Discipulis dixit,*
 “ *Pastor Pastorum Arietibus dixit, &c.* Consider there-
 “ fore who it was that said it, and to whom it was
 “ said; Truth said it to his Disciples, the Shepherd
 “ of Shepherds said it to the Rams, *After this Man-*
 “ *ner pray ye, &c. Forgive us our Trespases;* the King
 “ said it to his Soldiers, the Lord to his Servants,
 “ Christ to his Apostles; it was the Truth that spoke
 “ it to Men, he said to High and Low, &c. *Hæc*
 “ *enim est Oratio Regeneratorum, et quod omnium majus*
 “ *est, hæc est Oratio filiorum Dei, aliter enim qua Fronte*
 “ *dicitur Pater noster, &c.* for this is the Prayer of
 “ the Regenerate, and which is most of all, this is
 “ the Prayer of the Sons of God, otherwise with
 “ what Face can they say, *Our Father which art in*
 “ *Heaven.*” Thus far St. *Austin.*

Now the plain Drift of all this Discourse, of this
 great Saint and learned Father, is to show that all Men,
 and all Degrees of them, whether Apostles or Bishops,
 &c. are daily Sinners, and consequently stand in dai-
 ly Need to pray for the Forgiveness of their Tref-
 passes: And accordingly the same Father tells us, that
 one of the three Articles which the Church defended
 and maintained against the Pelagians was this, “ That
 “ how great soever the Righteousness of the Just or
 “ Regenerate may be, yet no Man, whilst he con-
 “ verses in this mortal Body, can live without Sin;”
 and this I observe to let Mr. *Shirley* know, that it
 will avail him nothing to plead for himself, that the
 Pelagians pretended to this Exemption from Sin, by
 the mere Power of Nature without Grace; but that
 he disclaims that Principle, because he holds the Ne-
 cessity of Grace, &c. for he may see that the Church
 of all Ages, and our own Church in particular, con-
 demns this arrogant and blasphemous Pretence to a
 total Exemption from Sin, or to a sinless Perfection,
 even in the Regenerate or those that were born again
 in Christ, tho’ he were an Apostle, &c.

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IF I might presume to advise Mr. *Shirley*, he would not rely so much upon the Authority of his late Masters and Directors, but rather follow the Scripture Advice: Let him remember the Days of old, let him consider the Years of many Generations; let him ask the Fathers and they will shew him, and his Elders, and they will tell him, the Way he should walk in, *Deut.* xxxii. 7. in a Word, let him read Dr. *Field's* excellent Appendix to his third Book, *Of the Church in the Article of Justification*, where he will find this Branch of the Pelagian Heresy, that the Just or Regenerate may live without committing Sin, (and which the Methodists have licked up from these Hereticks) condemned by the whole Church of God in all Ages, and by all Divines antient and modern, both Popish and Protestant, &c.

MR. *Shirley's* next Text will admit of a quicker Dispatch, and it is this; *He that keepeth the whole Law, and yet offendeth in one Point, is guilty of all*; whence I suppose it is concluded, that we must keep all or none, and consequently must attain a sinless Perfection. But this Text does by no Means prove, that a perfect and sinless Obedience is either possible or necessary; for it implies no more than that an habitual Transgression of, or an obstinate Continuance in any one known Sin, will as certainly damn a Man as if he had habitually transgressed the whole ten Commandments; he will, without Repentance, receive Damnation it is true, but not so great an one; for there are Degrees of Damnation, and some will be beat with many, and some with few Stripes; and God forbid that he who steals a Loaf should be guilty of Murder or Adultery, or suffer for the Guilt of them. So then the Apostle speaks only of the habitual Transgression of any one known Command, and an obstinate Continuance in such Transgression without Repentance; but not of a casual or accidental Violation of it, thro' Ignorance, Infirmity, or Surprize, and which is immediately

mediately confessed and repented of, and consequently forgiven; for in this Sense all the Commandments may be said to be fulfilled, according to St. *Austin*, *Omnia Mandata facta deputantur cum quæ infecta sunt remittuntur*, that is, All God's Commandments are deemed to be fulfilled, when such as are not fulfilled are forgiven.

MR. *Shirley's* last Text is, *He that breaketh one of the least Commandments, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven.* But here he has omitted a Word or two (whether designedly or not I will not say) which renders this Text intirely usefess to his Purpose; for the Text intire stands thus, *He that breaketh one of the least Commandments, and shall teach Men so to do, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven:* Now these Words, *and shall teach Men so to do*, which Mr. *Shirley*, very conveniently for himself, has omitted, do lead us by the Hand to a plain and obvious Answer; for the plain Meaning of the Text taken intire is this; He that cancels or denies the binding Force or Obligation of the least Commandment, and under that Pretence either transgresses it himself, or teaches and encourages others to do so without Scruple, shall be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. And that this is and must be the Meaning of the Text, will appear from the Occasion of it: Our Lord was falsely and maliciously accused and censured by the Scribes and Pharisees as a Man of loose Principles, and that his avowed Design was to cancel the Law and the Prophets, and the Obligation of Obedience to the Precepts of both, and consequently to open a wide Gap to all manner of Licentiousness and Immorality. In order to clear himself of this scandalous Aspersion, our Lord tells his Hearers, *Think not*, says he, *that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets*, as the Scribes and Pharisees falsely accuse me, so far am I from any such Design, that I tell you plainly, *unless your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of these* very

very *Scribes and Pharisees*, notwithstanding the high Opinion they have of their own Righteousness above all others, *ye shall in no Case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; and I am so far from cancelling the Obligation or binding Force of the least Commandment of the Law or the Prophets, or dispensing with the Breach of it as not obligatory, that whoever does, under that Pretence, break any of them, and shall by Word or Example teach others to do so, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. Now who sees not the vast Difference between breaking a Command, either great or small, as not obligatory or binding, and breaking it thro' Infirmary, Ignorance, or Surprize? and consequently, who sees not that the former may justly not only be called (if they be not the same) the least in, but also be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven; and yet the latter upon Repentance, thro' the Grace, Equity, and Mercy of the Gospel in Christ, be admitted and received into it?

BEFORE I quit this Paragraph of Mr. *Shirley's* Sermon, I cannot but observe a Side-stroke aimed and directed at his Brethren the Clergy; for he very plainly insinuates, that they do not truly represent to their Hearers the Nature of their Obligation to obey the perfect Law of Righteousness, nor acquaint them with the supernatural Powers and Privileges offered them in the Gospel, to enable them to obey that Law with a perfect Obedience. To this invidious and scandalous Aspersions I can answer for myself, and I am sure may do so for all my Brethren, with whose Writings or personal Labours I have had any Acquaintance, that we do truly and sincerely represent to our Hearers, their Duty and Obligation to obey the Laws of Righteousness, according to their Powers and Abilities; and that we do by no Means omit acquainting them with the superior Aids of Grace and Assistance of the Spirit, offered in the Gospel to all that earnestly pray for, and humbly rely and depend upon them, to dis-

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pose, help, and enable them, with their own Concurrence, to obey them; but as to any supernatural (of which more hereafter) Powers, as that means miraculous, we think we have no Warrant to flatter them with any such Powers or Privileges. We very well know that the Law in itself is inflexible and inexorable, and requires an exact, perfect, and sinless Obedience in every possible Degree, even to the least Jot or Tittle of it; and that when this Law was first given to Man, he had sufficient Power and Ability to pay that Obedience if he would, but no Promise or Security that he should always will to do so, being left to the Freedom of his own Will and the Liberty of his Election, either to stand by his voluntary Obedience, or to fall by his voluntary Disobedience; and that having, in Consequence of that Freedom, willed the latter, he lost the original Righteousness and Perfection of his Nature, both for himself, and all who should ever after proceed from his Loins, by natural Generation, to the End of the World; and so he and all his Posterity for ever after became not only incapable (of themselves) to pay that sinless and perfect Obedience which the Law required, but also became justly liable to the Penalty annexed to the Breach of the Law, namely, Death both temporal and eternal. In this forlorn Condition God took Pity on fallen Man, and entered into a second Covenant with him in Christ; the Conditions on God's Part being, that Christ, as Mediator between God and Man, should, in the appointed Time of his Father, take human Nature upon him, and in that Nature pay that sinless and perfect Obedience which the Law required, and which we, in the State of our fallen and corrupted Nature, were no longer able to pay, and to suffer Death on the Cross, thereby to satisfy the Justice of his Father, by making, by one Offering of himself, a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World; and that Man, now fallen from the
original

original Righteousness and Perfection of his Nature, should be received to Mercy on account of Christ's perfect Righteousness and Obedience, and the Merits of his Death and Passion, upon the Terms and Condition (on Man's part) of Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, together with an hearty and sincere (but imperfect) Obedience to his Commands for the Time to come; with a Promise (on God's part) of sufficient Aids of Grace, if complied with, to enable him to do so.

Now the Necessity of this Method or Oeconomy of our Redemption appears from hence, that otherwise the adorable Attributes of God, his Justice, Truth, and Mercy, could not upon any other Scheme have been reconciled to each other, or be manifested to the World. This is beautifully represented and described by a great and learned School Divine of the Church of *Rome*: "When God (says this Divine) first created *Adam*, he endowed him with many excellent Gifts and Graces, he gave him Justice to direct him, Truth to instruct him, Mercy to preserve him, and Peace to comfort and delight him; but no sooner did Man fall, and disobeyed, than all these Graces and Virtues left and forsook him, and returning to God that gave them, reported what had befallen Man on Earth, all earnestly (but in a very different manner) soliciting the Almighty concerning Man, thus involved in Sin and Misery: Justice loudly called for the immediate Execution of the Sentence, *Let him die the Death*: Truth as earnestly demanded the inflicting the threatened Punishment; on the other Hand, Mercy as loudly and earnestly pleaded for Pity and Compassion to Man, formed out of the Dust of the Earth, and deceived by the Craft of the old Serpent, *Satan*; and Peace pleaded for a Reconciliation, and endeavoured to pacify the Wrath of God, conceived against his poor Creature, the Work of his own

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“ Hand: They were all urgent in their several and
 “ contradictory Demands, and these Demands all ne-
 “ cessary for the Manifestation of the Glory of God,
 “ and of his Attributes; but here lay the grand Dif-
 “ ficulty, if God complied with any or either of them
 “ absolutely, the other must have been unsatisfied,
 “ and never taken Notice of: Upon this intricate
 “ Case, God the Father calls a Cabinet Council
 “ of the other two Persons of the Holy Trinity,
 “ and after mature Deliberation, of the several
 “ and contradictory Demands of these powerful Orators,
 “ it was resolved, that the Son of God, the second Per-
 “ son of the Trinity, should take upon him the Nature
 “ of Man, that so he might partake of his Miseries and
 “ subject himself to the Punishment justly deserved by
 “ Man, and that Man should be received to Mercy, up-
 “ on the Terms of Faith and Repentance, which lat-
 “ ter was not allowed him before. And thus the con-
 “ tradictory Demands, of these earnest Solicitors, were
 “ all satisfied. Man was punished in Christ, as Jus-
 “ tice demanded; what was threatened was executed,
 “ as Truth would have it; the Sinner was pitied and
 “ pardoned, as Mercy pleaded, and God and Man
 “ reconciled, as Peace requested; and thus that of
 “ the Royal Prophet *Psal. xxv. 16. viz. Mercy and*
 “ *Truth were met together, and Peace and Righteous-*
 “ *ness (or Justice) have kissed each other,* was eminently
 “ fulfilled.” *Camaracen in Senten. Lib. 3. in Initio.*

How wonderfully great and surprising was this
 Scheme for the Redemption of Mankind! and how
 impossible would it have been for any other but the
 Divine Wisdom to contrive Means to satisfy all the
 foregoing Attributes, without interfering with, or
 incroaching upon the Interests of each other, and at
 the same time to twist and interweave his own Glory
 among them all; and from this Scheme we may ac-
 count for all the Mysteries of the Incarnation, Death,
 and Passion of our blessed Saviour; for 1. a Mediator,

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or Medium, that is, to bring the Extremes together, ought to partake of the Nature, and have Concern for and in the Interests of both: Now the Extremes were God and Man at Variance with each other, and therefore it was necessary that the Mediator between them should be God and Man, and so be Partaker of the Nature, and be concerned for and in the respective Interests of both; which accordingly was done, by the Union of the Divine and Human Nature, in the Person of Christ at his Incarnation. 2. As God could not forgive Man, without due Satisfaction to his Truth, and Justice, therefore it was necessary that this Mediator should make this Satisfaction, (Man in himself being utterly incapable of it) which he performed by suffering Death on the Cross; the infinite Dignity of his Person, being God-Man, giving an infinite Value to his Sufferings, so that the least Drop of his Blood was sufficient Satisfaction, not only for the Sins of this, but for the Sins of ten thousand times ten thousand Worlds, if there had been so many Worlds to be redeemed. Lastly, because if this Mediator had taken our Nature upon him, in the ordinary way of Generation, he must have partaken of the Corruption of it, and so could not satisfy the Justice of God for the Sins of others; for had he the least Stain or Corruption of his own, he could not do that, therefore it was necessary he should be born of a pure and spotless Virgin, without the intervention of Man, by the miraculous Power of the Holy Ghost. And thus we see how all the Parts and Mysteries of Christ's Incarnation, depend upon each other, and are so closely and necessarily connected, that by taking away any one, all the rest fall to the Ground.

LET us now proceed, and consider Mr. *Shirley's* Scheme of the Incarnation, the Account he gives of it, and the Ends and Designs he assigns to it. Now the sole End and Design which, in this Sermon at least, he assigns to the Incarnation of Christ, is only that

we might be endowed, with a supernatural Power to obey the Laws of Righteousness, with a sinless Perfection; he never so much as once makes the least mention of satisfying the Justice of his Father, or offering himself a Sacrifice of Atonement, for the Sins of the World, on the Altar of the Cross, as any End of the Incarnation of Christ, or of his Sufferings. This I suppose he sucked in from Mr. *Hervey's* Dialogues, between *Theron* and *Aspasio*, for which he (Mr. *Hervey*) is very justly censured by Mr. *W----* himself, in his Remarks upon said Dialogues; for Mr. *Shirley* having, from his late Masters, and Directors, laid it down as a Principle, that we may and must obey the Laws of Righteousness with a sinless Perfection and Obedience, and it being certain, and confessed by all, that it is not in the Power of any of the Sons of *Adam*, descending from him by natural Generation, to obey the whole, or even the least Part of the Law, in an holy and acceptable Manner, by the mere Power of Nature alone; therefore, says he, our Nature must be rendered capable to perform the whole Law with a sinless Perfection, by some powerful and miraculous Means. “ Here (says he) the Mystery of our Redemption is at once laid open to us, and the Reasons of our Saviour’s Incarnation and Sufferings appear necessary, and divinely glorious, &c.” pag. 8. Again: “ See here (says he) the Reason of Christ’s Incarnation, that he might communicate the divine Life to the Nature of Man: See the Reason of his Sufferings, that he might suppress, mortify, and overcome the earthly Life, &c. See the Reason of his Death, that he might subdue the earthly Life, in every possible Respect.” Pag. 9.

AND is this, indeed, the only Reason of Christ’s Incarnation, Death, and Sufferings, which Mr. *Shirley* knows or allows of, namely, to mortify the earthly Life in us, by the Spirit and Grace of Regeneration? What is become of satisfying the Justice of his Father,

Father, and making a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the World, which were hitherto wont to be assigned as the chief and principal End, and Design, nay, the very fundamental Cause, of Christ's Incarnation, Death and Sufferings, by all Divines, and all Christians, till these new Masters, and Dictators in Divinity, these pretended *πνευματικοί*, or inspired Men, rose up among us, to teach us a new and strange Divinity? How does, (or indeed can) Mr. *Shirley*, or rather his late Masters and Directors, account for the satisfying those divine Attributes of God, his Justice and Truth, if the only End and Design of Christ's Incarnation, Death, and Suffering, was no other than to procure for us a supernatural Power, or Privilege to enable us perfectly to obey the Laws of Righteousness? Nay, I will venture to affirm, that if this were the only End of Christ's Incarnation, &c. it was not consistent with the Justice, the Wisdom, or Goodness of God the Father, to cloyster and immure, the Son of his eternal Love, in a Mansion or Cottage of Clay, and to expose him to all the Miseries, and Infirmities of human Life, and the bitter Pains and Agonies of Death on the Cross, the most infamous and accursed of all Deaths and Punishments; for might he not have conferred all those supernatural and miraculous Powers and Privileges upon us, without exposing an innocent Person to such Miseries and Afflictions, if there were not some other superior and more necessary Reasons for it? I would be very loth to suspect Mr. *Shirley* of Socinianism, tho' this Principle of his looks very like it, they being the only Sect of Christians that deny the Sufferings of Christ to be a Satisfaction to the Justice of God, or a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Sins Men. I grant, indeed, that Christ, by his Death and Sufferings, has merited the Grace of Regeneration, and all other Graces and Privileges for us, and that he hath promised to confer them on

all that believe in his Name, and that earnestly pray for, and humbly rely upon them; but this was far from being the sole End of his Death and Sufferings; for if it were, there would be no Necessity for either, it being evident, that God could bestow them upon us, without them: The satisfying, therefore, the Justice of his Father, for the Demerit of Sin, and making an Atonement for all Sin, both original and actual, was the sole, principal, and chief End of his Incarnation, &c. and all other Things which he performed, or procured for us, are only Effects and Consequences, or necessary Adjuncts of that first and principal End of both.

IN a Word, Sir, I think the Scheme which I have laid down, of the Mystery and Oeconomy of our Redemption, by a crucified Saviour, is the true Christian, antient, and Catholick Scheme, and accounts for all the Parts and Mysteries of it, and shews the consistency of them with all the divine Attributes; whereas Mr. *Shirley's* Scheme (at least as expressed in his Sermon) is altogether new, and, except among Socinians, unheard of before, and inconsistent with most of the divine Attributes.

“WHAT strange Hypotheses, says Mr. *Shirley*, “would these Moral Philosophers (for so, he says, he “must call them) suppose? Where do they suppose “was the Necessity of Christ’s Incarnation, &c. Did “he die merely that we might indulge ourselves in “our Sins, having him as our Atonement? Where “would be the Justice, Greatness, or even Goodness “of this Design, &c.” Pag. 7. As for myself I as little know as I care, who these Moral Philosophers, *in nubibus*, are, who make the indulging themselves in their Sins, the End of Christ’s Incarnation, &c. I profess to know none such, they are not of my Acquaintance; whoever, or wherever they be, I bid them Anathema. If Mr. *Shirley* means his Brethren of the Clergy, who are not *More ejus furioso et enthu-*
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fastico religious, as I think it pretty evident he does, their constant preaching, and earnest recommending the Duties of Christian Morality, as explained, enlarged, and recommended by their divine Master, is an uncontestable Evidence for them, that they do by no Means look upon the Death and Sufferings of Christ, as any Encouragement, or Privilege to indulge themselves or others in their Sins, or in any one known Sin whatsoever. It is true, they teach, that if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and that he is the Propitiation for our Sins; and does not St. *John* * say, the same? Are they not his very Words; and dare Mr. *Shirley* contradict them? Dare he say that the Apostle did give any Encouragement to Men to indulge themselves in their Sins, because Jesus Christ is our Advocate, and the Propitiation for our Sins? And yet he may as well charge the Apostle with giving this Encouragement as his Brethren the Clergy, since they only preach what the blessed Apostle taught them. But tho' the Clergy tell their Hearers, that if they sin they have an Advocate with the Father, &c. yet they warn them at the same Time, and they let them know, that if any of them continue obstinately, and habitually in the Commission of any one known Sin, much more in the Commission of many, the Death and Sufferings of Christ will avail them nothing, but to the contrary will aggravate their Damnation; and therefore they do by no Means imagine the indulging themselves in their Sins, as this Gentleman (according to the Charity which by his late Conversion to Methodism he has learned) insinuates, to be any Cause, Reason, or Necessity of Christ's Incarnation, Death, or Sufferings; to the contrary they very well know, and constantly preach, that this would be to contradict one main End and Design of his being manifested in the Flesh, namely, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.

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• I *John* ii. 1.

“ PERHAPS we may be told, says he, that he died
 “ that he might supply by his Merits, what was want-
 “ ing in our own. So that if we perform a conside-
 “ rable or a major Part of the Law of Righteousness,
 “ his Righteousness will atone for the rest, &c.”
Ubi supra. Surely never did any Christian before these
 great Pretenders to Bible Christianity, so much as
 doubt whether the Merits of Christ did atone for the
 want of Merit in us, provided we believe faithfully
 on him, and rely upon them; for what would become
 of us, who neither have nor can have any Merit of
 our own, in our best and greatest Services, and who
 are desired by our Lord, when we have done all that
 we are commanded, or more, if either were possible,
 to reckon ourselves unprofitable Servants; what, I
 say, in such Circumstances would become of us, if
 the Merits of Christ did not atone for us.

HERE then you see the Snake in the Grass plainly
 discovering himself: These Men imagine and pretend,
 that they perform the Works of Righteousness with
 such a sinless Perfection, that they need not the Merits
 of Christ, to atone for any Imperfection of Parts or
 Degrees, attending it; for Mr. *W---y*, in one of his
 Appeals, after professing full Communion with the
 Spirit of Quakerism, affirms plainly, that all Religion
 is but a dead Form, except Perfection by immediate
 Inspiration; but this of disclaiming the Merits of
 Christ, to atone for the Want of Merit in us, is a most
 impious and heterodox Notion, suggested by the Fa-
 ther of Lies, in order to fill the Entertainers of it
 with spiritual Pride, Blasphemy, &c. &c. and could
 never proceed from the Spirit of God or his Christ.

“ Oh! but we pretend, that if we perform a confi-
 “ derable or a major Part of the Law of God, Christ’s
 “ Righteousness will atone for the rest, &c.” But
 this is another most false and scandalous Asperion,
 plainly levelled at his Brethren, for they neither af-
 firm or pretend any such Thing; to the contrary,
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they affirm, and constantly maintain, that if Men do not with Integrity and Sincerity fulfil the whole Will, and Law of God, and if they should wilfully, and habitually persist in transgressing, any Part of either, known to be his Law or Will, that in that Case neither the Righteousness of Christ, nor the Merits of his Death and Sufferings, can be of any service to them; for in this Sense, *be that Offends in any one Particular*, of the Will or Law of God, *is guilty of all*, as before explained; but if they do chance, thro' Infirmity or Surprize, or the sudden and unexpected Attack of an unforeseen Temptation, to transgress any Particular of the Will or Law of God, and that they do upon Recollection, humbly, and with sincere Sorrow and Contrition of Heart, confess and repent for the same, then we say that God is faithful and just to all his Promises in Christ, and will forgive us such Sins, and cleanse us from all such Iniquities, for the sake of Christ's sinless and perfect Obedience, and the all-sufficient Merits of his Death and Passion: and this I am well assured is the true Doctrine of the Gospel, and of the Catholick Church, against which all the Devils and Gates of Hell shall never be able to prevail; and he that denies it, denies the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and is an Infidel.

Is it not very pleasant, dear Sir, to see this Gentleman run Riot upon his own false Supposition; for he supposes very falsely, that we pretend we may leave a Part of the Law of God undone, and perform the rest, which he pleasantly calls Patch-Work Salvation, and asks many ridiculous and impertinent Questions about it. Pag. 7. Thus he sets up a Man of Straw, and manfully attacks him, he builds Castles in the Air, which will cost him no Labour to demolish; for having no Foundation they will fall of themselves. But all this is designed by way of Reflection upon his Brethren, who do not join him in preaching up a sinless Perfection, and the Possibility and Necessity of it; but

but though we deny the Necessity or Possibility of a sinless and perfect Obedience to the Law, yet we are as far from countenancing the wilful and habitual Neglect, or Transgression of the least Commandment of the Law, or allowing it to be consistent with any Hope or Assurance of Salvation, as he is from Truth or Charity in these his Censures upon his Brethren : We only plead for the Grace, Equity, and Mercy of the Gospel, for our involuntary Failings and unavoidable Infirmities, upon our Repentance, and Faith in the Merits of Christ ; and he that denies or disputes this, is no Christian ; he is fallen from Grace, and professes himself still under the Law or the Covenant of Works, and consequently is under an indispensable Obligation of the perfect and sinless Obedience that was required by it.

BUT I believe you will think it now high Time to look more warily about us, for the Gentleman has got into a syllogising Humour, and fancies he carries all before him in Mode and Figure ; for thus, at length, he argues in Form : “ If the Law of God, says he, “ be a perfect Law of Righteousness, then Man’s “ Obedience must be a perfect Obedience to Righteousness.” But the Law of God is a perfect Law of Righteousness ; *Ergo, &c.* To this dead-doing Syllogism I answer, by denying the Consequence of the Major ; for although the Law of God be indisputably a perfect Law of Righteousness, yet it is not now, under the Oeconomy of Grace and the Gospel, that Man’s Obedience should be perfect, *i. e.* sinless ; but it is sufficient that it be sincere and hearty, otherwise there would be no Difference between the first and second, or the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace ; for it was only under the first Covenant of Works that a sinless and perfect Obedience was required to the Law of God ; but God seeing that the first Covenant did not answer the End, entered into another Covenant with Man, wherein he accepts of our hearty

hearty and sincere (though imperfect) Obedience, for the Sake of Christ's perfect and sinless Obedience, and the infinite Merits of his Death and Passion: And it is the same Case in human Laws, which require an exact and perfect Obedience to every Tittle and Circumstance of them; but there is a Court of Equity or Chancery to moderate the Rigour of the Law, which in itself, and considered as Law, is inflexible and inexorable, otherwise in many Cases and Circumstances extreme Law would be extreme Wrong: Even so (if I may be allowed to compare great Things with small) though the Law of God be a perfect Law, and according to the Letter, and considered as Law, requires an exact and perfect Obedience; yet there is a Court of Equity or Chancery erected by the Covenant of Grace, in which Christ sits as Chancellor, to moderate the Rigour of the Law, which in itself is inflexible and inexorable, and makes all due and equitable Allowance for such Failings and Infirmities, as are not obstinately and habitually continued and persevered in.

2. I ANSWER, by distinguishing the Consequence of the Major; for Man's Obedience must be perfect, with a Perfection of Parts I allow the Consequence; with a Perfection of Degrees and Intentions, I deny it. Again, says he, "If Man's Obedience must be perfect, then his Nature is or may be made capable of performing such Obedience." But the first is true; *Ergo, &c.* To this I answer two ways, 1. by denying the Consequence of the Major with a Distinction; for I grant that Man's Nature may be rendered capable of performing a sinless and perfect Obedience, by the absolute Power of God, and by putting an irresistible Force upon his Will, otherwise I deny it; and as the absolute Power of God, and an irresistible Force put upon Man's Will, would take away all Merit from our Obedience, and destroy the Foundation of Rewards and Punishments, he therefore uses neither the one or the other, but gives sufficient Aids of Grace, and Assistance

ance of his holy Spirit, to enable us to do our Duty, in a Way consistent with the Freedom of our Wills and the Liberty of our Elections, but applies no supernatural (as that imports miraculous) Power or irresistible Force, for the Reasons above assigned. 2. I answer, by denying the Minor with a Distinction, as in the Answer to the former Argument. And now that we are got into the syllogising Mood, where lies the Danger if I should, in my Turn, venture upon a Syllogism or two: Thus, If we be not under the Law but under Grace, then a sinless and perfect Obedience to the Law is neither expected nor required from us: *But we are not under the Law, but under Grace*, as St. Paul in so many express Words assures us; therefore a sinless and perfect Obedience is neither expected or required from us.

IN this Argument, the only Proposition which I suppose deniable is the Consequence of the Major, the Minor being fenced by the infallible Authority of an Apostle; and the Consequence of the Major I prove thus: If the essential Difference between being under the Law, and being under Grace, be, that a sinless and perfect Obedience was required and expected under the former, but not under the latter, then if we be not under the Law but under Grace, a sinless and perfect Obedience is neither required or expected from us. But the essential Difference between being under the Law and under Grace, is, that a sinless and perfect Obedience was required under the former, but not under the latter; therefore, if we be not under the Law but under Grace, a sinless and perfect Obedience is neither required nor expected from us. The major Proposition I take to be undeniable, and if any one will deny the minor, let him assign any more essential Difference and he shall receive a farther Answer.

ONCE more, and adieu to syllogising till a farther Occasion: It is possible, with the Aid and Assistance of ordinary Grace, to obey the Law with a sinless and perfect

perfect Obedience, or it is not; if not, then we are agreed; if it be, then let Mr. *Shirley*, or any other for him, account for the following Texts, *In many Things we offend all*, says St. *James*; *If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves and the Truth is not in us*, says St. *John*; *There is not a just Man upon Earth*, says *Solomon*, *that doth Good*, that is, constantly and perseveringly, *and that sinneth not*, Eccles. vii. 16. Let him name any one Saint, under any Dispensation of the Church, that was in all Degrees perfect, and never transgressed in any Degree; and lastly, let him show us how a sinless Perfection in any, is consistent with the peculiar Privilege and Prerogative of our Saviour, to whom alone, of all that ever were or ever will be born of *Adam's Seed*, it belonged to be perfectly *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners*.

MR. *Shirley* having thus far endeavoured to shew wherein preaching the Gospel doth not consist, proceeds in the next Place to shew us positively, what it is to preach the Gospel: "And this (he tells us) is " no more nor no less than to make known, recom-
 " mend, and inforce the Spirituality of it, &c. that
 " it is the Power of God unto Salvation to them that
 " believe; so that it is through Faith alone that we
 " receive the Spirit of God, or of Christ, that we may
 " be spiritually born again, and made his Children by
 " Adoption, &c." Here he again excludes preaching the Works of evangelical Obedience from being any part of preaching the Gospel; for if this latter be no more nor no less than making known, &c. the Spirituality of the Gospel, it plainly follows, that he thinks preaching Morality, or the Works of evangelical Obedience, is preaching no part of the Gospel.

BUT to pass this, I could wish he had been a little more explicit, and told us what he means by the Spirituality of the Gospel; for this is too general and indefinite a Description to give us a distinct or definite
 Notion

Notion of it, *Vir dolofus verfatur in generalibus*; he that defigns to deceive, avoids as much as may be to defcend to Particulars, he rather choofes to convey himfelf and his Meaning away, in a Cloud of confufed Generalities. But to return: If by the Spirituality of the Gofpel he means, that all its Precepts are pure, holy, and fpiritual; that the Worfhip it requires and injoins is a fpiritual Worfhip of the Heart and Soul, and not a carnal outward Worfhip, confifting of the Blood and Sacrifices of Bulls, and Goats, and other Animals, as among *Jews* and Heathens; if he means, that all its Promifes and Rewards, and all its Motives to Obedience are not temporal or worldly, but fpiritual, heavenly, and eternal, I can fee no imaginable Reason why Mr. *Shirley* fhould fuppose or infinuate, that preaching the Works of evangelical Obedience is inconfiftent with preaching the Spirituality of the Gofpel, in this Senfe; fince all that do preach the moral Works of evangelical Obedience, do preach them in this fpiritual Senfe, and in no other: What other Spirituality of the Gofpel he means, or would be at, I for my part cannot conceive, nor I fuppose can any other, till he is pleafed to explain himfelf a little more explicitly than he has done. Whether it is by Faith alone (in the Senfe I know both he and his prefent Directors take the Word Faith) be the fole and only Term and Condition of our receiving the Spirit of Adoption, or our Acceptance with God, is a Queftion of too great Importance to undertake the Difcuffion of in the narrow Compafs of a Letter, efpecially in this, which has already fwelled upon my Hands to a greater prolixity than I at firft defigned, and than, I fear, may be agreeable to you: I fhall therefore trouble myfelf or you no farther (at leaft at this Time) about it, than I am telling you, that fo far as ever I could underftand St. *Paul*, and the learned Commentators upon his Epiftles, I think it very plain that the *Solidians* of this and former Ages intirely miftake that
great

great Apostle's Meaning ; for by Faith, he does by no Means understand a single Act of personal Faith, whereby a Man believes that his Sins are forgiven him ; (which is the Sense wherein our modern *Solifidians* take the Word Faith) but by Faith he means the whole complex Body of the Christian Oeconomy, or Dispensation, in Opposition to the Oeconomy or Dispensation of the Law of *Moses* ; for so the Word Faith signifies in several Places of Scripture : Thus, *the hearing of Faith*, is the hearing of the whole Christian Religion, *Gal. iii. 2. Preaching the Faith*, is preaching the whole Christian Religion, *Rom. x. 8.* and *contending for the Faith*, is contending for the Christian Religion : Even so when St. *Paul* says, *we are justified by Faith, and not by the Works of the Law*, it is, I think, very plain, that by Faith he does not mean a special Act of Faith, whereby we believe our Sins to be forgiven ; but by Faith he means the whole Christian Religion, by believing of which, and living according to the Rules and Precepts of it, we are now justified from all those Things from which we could not be justified by the Law of *Moses*.

THAT this and this only must be his Meaning, is very evident from the Occasion and Design of not only his Epistle to the *Romans*, but of that also to the *Galatians*, which was the Controversy then warmly disputed between the *Gentile* and *Jewish* Converts ; for such of the *Jews* as received the Christian Faith, were for imposing Circumcision and the whole Law of *Moses* upon the *Gentile* Converts, affirming, that if they were not circumcised, and kept the Law, they could not be saved : And though this Dispute was for the present compromised in the Council of *Jerusalem*, *Acts xv.* yet such was the restless Zeal of the *Jewish* Converts, especially the *Pharisees*, for their old Master, *Moses*, that notwithstanding the conciliary Decree of the Apostles and Bishops of *Judea*, they were for imposing the whole Law upon the *Gentile* Converts.

Against

Against these Judaizing Christians St. *Paul* (as the peculiar Apostle of the *Gentiles*) vigorously opposes himself, vindicating their Liberty against this Imposition, especially in his Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, where these Judaizing Christians were most numerous, and prevailing; constantly affirming that the Christian Dispensation is now the only Means whereby we are to expect Justification and Acceptance with God, and not the Dispensation of *Moses*; the former he calls Faith, and the latter Works. This were easily demonstrated, by the Arguments which the Apostle uses in and throughout his whole Epistle to the *Romans*, if I had Time, or were it necessary; for whoever will carefully attend to the Train and Tenour of his Reasoning, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, will be easily convinced, if he be not obstinate, that he had this Controversy between the *Jewish* and *Gentile* Converts always in View, and that all his Arguments and Reasons are levelled against this imposing Humour of the *Jewish* Converts, and that all he says concerning Justification is solely relative to that Controversy; and consequently in the present State of the Church, we are but very little, if any thing at all, concerned in the Consequence of it. In a Word, St. *Paul* (that I may use the Words of the great Dr. *Stillingfleet*, in his Sermon on *Rom. i. 16.*) is so far from asserting that our Justification, or the Terms of it, depends upon a single Act of Faith, as distinguished from evangelical Obedience, that his whole Discourse turns upon this single Question, Whether God will pardon the Sins of Men upon any other Terms than those that are declared and set forth by the Christian Dispensation? the former he calls Works, and the latter Faith, and every where maintains the Negative of the Question; that is, he maintains that neither the Law of Nature and Reason, nor the Law of *Moses*, can gain us Remission of Sins, but only the Christian Law delivered to us in the Gospel, which he always calls by the
Name

Name of Faith, as he does the other by the Name of Works. “ I know (says the same great Doctor) that
 “ the Subtilty of latter Times has made St. *Paul* dis-
 “ pute, in the Question of Justification, not like one
 “ brought up at the Foot of *Gamaliel*, but of the
 “ Master of the Sentences; but Men (says he) did
 “ not understand their Religion a Bit the worse then,
 “ for being plain and easy; and, it may be, if others
 “ since had understood their Religion better, there
 “ would never need so much Subtilty to explain, or so
 “ many nice Distinctions to defend it: The Apostle
 “ makes the Terms of Justification and Salvation the
 “ very same, for as he says that we are justified by
 “ Faith, so he says here, that the Gospel is the Pow-
 “ er of God unto Salvation, to every one that believes.
 “ If then a single Act of Faith be sufficient for Jus-
 “ tification, why not for Salvation?” But this last our
 modern Solifidians do not pretend to; they are forced
 to acknowledge, that the good Works of Evangelical
 Obedience, are the ordinary and stated Terms of Sal-
 vation; but why not of Justification also, I could
 never yet hear any convincing Reason? Nay, some-
 times (such is the Force of Truth) they acknowledge,
 that good Works are necessary to Justification, as well
 as Salvation. I shall give an evident Instance of this
 in Mr. *Wesley*, who is very often carried beyond his
 Judgment, thro’ his vehement Zeal for this Doctrine
 of Justification; for in his *Earnest Appeal, Dublin*,
 print. Edit. 5. Part 1. Pag. 6. he lays down this as
 a Principle, “ That justifying Faith, is never given
 “ to the Righteous or Godly, or to such as are dis-
 “ posed or prepared to receive God’s Favours, but to
 “ the Wicked and Ungodly, who never in all their
 “ Lives did any one good Thing, but every Thing
 “ that deserved everlasting Damnation, &c.” Now
 it is not the monstrous Impiety of this Doctrine that
 I am at present concerned for, but to shew how he
 contradicts all this; for in another Part of his *Appeal*

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he confesses, “ That, in the Nature of Things, Repentance must precede justifying Faith, and this Repentance (he affirms) must consist not only of a sincere Resolution of Amendment, but an actual producing Fruits meet for Repentance, in doing Good, forgiving our Brother, attending the Ordinances of God, and obeying him according to the Measure and Proportion of Grace, which we have received.” All this, I say, he acknowledges must of Necessity go before justifying Faith. Now if he or Mr. *Shirley* can reconcile these two Passages, we may expect a friendly Agreement between the greatest Contradictions in Nature.

As to the remaining Part of Mr. *Shirley*'s Sermon, where he lays down what his Flock is to expect from him, and he from his Flock, I will only say, that if he be as good as his Promise to his Parishioners, I will venture to assure him, that his Brethren will be so far from finding Fault with him, that they will highly applaud and rejoice with and for him, and that he need not doubt but his Flock will have a suitable Regard and Veneration for him. But still I cannot but observe, that he cannot possibly forbear reflecting on his Brethren as he goes along; for he tells his Hearers, “ That he will feed them with Gospel Provision, and fill their Souls with the Bread of Heaven, not starving them with empty Declamations and eloquent Harangues, scribbled out of the first Book that comes to Hand, upon some Moral Virtue, &c.” Here is another plain Side-stroke at his Brethren, insinuating, that their Sermons are nothing else but Declamations upon Moral Virtue, and even these not the Product of their own Study, but scribbled out of some Book. I do not know whether this Reflection be founded upon any certain Knowledge he has of any one that does so, or whether this might not have been his own Practice, before he was inspired, and so (according to the vulgar Expression,) measures his Brethren's
Corn

Corn by his own Bushel. But be that as it will, I will venture to say, that it had not been amiss, nor the least Disparagement to him (how high an Opinion soever he may entertain of his own Parts, whether acquired or infused,) if he had scribbled something out of some good Book, at least taken some Hints from thence, before he preached or printed his Sermon.

“LET not any (says he) affirm that I do not preach up, recommend, and insist on good Works as necessary, as some slanderously Report of me.” Pag. 16. Does he so? How then, in God’s Name, comes it that he has evidently made it one main End (at least) of his Sermon, to prove, that preaching Morality is not preaching the Gospel? How comes it that he reflects on his Brethren for their eloquent Harangues, upon some Moral Virtue, which is nothing else but preaching good Works, when he does at the same Time confess that he does so himself? What! is *Saul* also among the Prophets? and Mr. *Shirley*, (notwithstanding all his Declamations against them,) among the Moral Philosophers? Methinks these Things do not hang well together.

OH! but he preaches up a lively Faith, and not a dead one, and no Faith is lively that does not produce good Works; therefore he preaches good Works not directly (no, have a Care of that, that would be high Treason against Mr. *Wesley’s* favourite Doctrine concerning Justification,) but implicitly, and by Consequence. Mighty well! but pray why not directly and by Name, (if they be necessary to Salvation) as well as implicitly? Would there be any Harm, or Danger in doing so, without going so far about the Bush? I apprehend not, especially as St. *James* tells us, that *Faith without Works is dead*, and that it is but the Carcase of Faith, which like Carrion stinks in the Nostrils of God; and that St. *Paul* tells us, if we had all the Faith in the World so that we could remove Mountains, and tho’ we had all Knowledge,

ledge, and understood all Myſteries, and, in a Word, could ſpeak with Tongues of Men and Angels, yet, alas! without Charity (that is without good Works, for Charity is the fulfilling of the Law, the End of the Commandment, and the very Bond of Perfection) all would ſignify juſt----nothing; we ſhould be no better than old, noiſy, brazen Kettles, or tinkling Cymbals. Now if theſe Things be ſo, I do humbly preſume, that it is as (I had almoſt ſaid more) neceſſary to preach good Works, as Faith, becauſe it is good Works that give Life, Force, and Energy to Faith, and that without them, all the Faith in the World will not juſtify us; which I prove thus: If Faith without Works be dead, then Faith without Works cannot juſtify us; but *Faith without Works is dead*, as the Apoſtle St. James expreſſly tells us. Therefore Faith without Works cannot juſtify us. The Conſequence of the Major, the only Propoſition which I ſuppoſe deniable in the Argument, I prove thus: If a dead Faith cannot poſſibly juſtify us, then if Faith without Works be dead, Faith without Works cannot poſſibly juſtify us. But a dead Faith cannot poſſibly juſtify us, therefore if Faith without Works be dead, Faith without Works cannot poſſibly juſtify us.

MR. *Sbirley*, after telling his Audience, that he thinks it his Duty to preach the whole Moral Law to them, &c. ſays, if he ſhould leave them there, if he ſhould leave them to the Weakneſs and Corruption of the fallen Man, he would bring them bad News, &c. but he promiſes them another and far ſuperior Nature, and the Power of God for their Salvation, &c. *Ibid. ubi Supra*. But whoever ſaid or imagined, that Man in his preſent State of corrupted Nature, was able to perform the Whole or any Part of the Law of God, without the Aids of Grace, and the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit? Who, I ſay, except *Pelagians* ever affirmed or thought of any ſuch thing? If therefore he Means no more than the Aids of Grace
and

and the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, in the due and regular Use of the Means of Grace, I do presume that no Man will, or indeed can, find Fault with him for recommending these things to his Flock as earnestly as he can. But I very much doubt that he means a great deal more than this; and that he is of his (Mr. *Wesley's*) Opinion, who, in his *Serious Answer to Doctor Trap*, insists, "That Christ stands as our Re-
 " generation, and that by him we have the very same
 " paradisaical Nature, which *Adam* had before his
 " Fall, and which had he not fallen, would have been
 " transmitted to all his Posterity: He affirms (I say)
 " that by our Regeneration in Christ, we have that
 " very paradisaical Nature propagated in us, nay,
 " the very identical paradisaical Nature which Christ,
 " at his Incarnation, assumed in the Womb of the
 " blessed Virgin *Mary*, in order to enable us to obey
 " the Law with a sinless Perfection, &c." A Doctr-
 ine no less impious in itself, than contradictory to the
 Tenets of the Church of God in all Ages, and of our
 own Church, which acknowledges the Corruption of
 Nature to remain even in the Regenerate.

THIS, I suppose, is what he means by that other, and superior Nature, which he promises to put his Hearers constantly in Mind of, and flatters them with the Hopes of, to no other Purpose (I mean not his, but the Purpose of the Doctrine) but to fill them with Blasphemy, and Spiritual Pride, as it did a poor blind Lay-preacher among the Swadlers, who affirmed, that he was as righteous, and as free from Sin as (*Horresco referens!*) Jesus Christ, and that it was impossible he could sin, because the Holy Ghost dwelt bodily in him. But I must do that Justice to Mr. *Wesley*, to declare, that he silenced and degraded him, and, in a Letter under his Hand to myself, confessed that he was a vile Enthusiast.

I REMEMBER, that being once urged with the Pe-
 tition in the Lord's Prayer, *Thy will be done on Earth*

as it is in Heaven, in Support of sinless Perfection I asked my Antagonist, what he thought of these Words of our Saviour, *Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*; and whether he thought they implied an exact Equality: He was aware of the Consequence of answering; for if he said they did not, it was obvious to return the same Answer to his own Instance, and therefore he did say, that he believed it was possible to be as perfect as our heavenly Father; this I can aver for Truth; but as there were no Witnesses by, and that I know, by many Experiences, these Men, notwithstanding all their Pretences to Bible Christianity, do not scruple to deny their Words, I think it would be to no Purpose to mention the Person's Name.

It was upon this Principle, I suppose, that the blasphemous Wretch, *Muggleton*, took upon him the Person of Christ, and had *Hosanna to the Son of David*, &c. sung before him thro' the Streets of *Bristol*, by the Rabble that attended him; and tho' we have not as yet seen or heard of any such barefaced or publick Blasphemies as this, among the Methodists, yet if we may judge what may be, by what has been, the Consequence of the modern Pretences to the immediate Inspiration of the Spirit, in a Generation or two more (when Mr. *Wesley*, who at present keeps this Spirit within some Bounds, is gathered to his Fathers) may be fatal.

MONTANUS, the Arch-Heretick, set up at first with the very same Pretences that Mr. *Whitefield*, and Mr. *Wesley* have done; he made no Innovation in the Faith; he was perfectly orthodox in the Doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Person of Christ, which was the Rock that all former Hereticks had split upon; he only accused the Bishops and Clergy as negligent in their Duties, that they did not preach the Spirituality of the Gospel; in short, that they were mere Strangers to the Spirit and Life of Christianity, and

and sunk into a meer animal Life, (or in Mr. *Shirley's* Language) they were all nothing but Moral Philosophers: He therefore, without any Call, set up for a Reformer of these Abuses, and pretended to introduce a new Oeconomy, and a more spiritual Dispensation, than the Church had yet known. None more strict in outward Appearance than he, his male and female Prophets and Followers; their Morality was unexceptionable, and more so than that of our modern Methodists or Montanists; his Discipline, Mortification, and Renunciation of the World, far more severe; and his Pretence to the Spirit of Martyrdom and taking up the Cross, as confident. All this appears from *Tertullian*, the only Disciple of his whose Writings or any Part of them, are come to our Hands; and yet, notwithstanding all this, never did any Heretick do so much Mischief to Christianity as he and his Followers have done, as appears manifestly from the historical Account of Montanism published by Doctor *Hicks*, and supposed to be wrote by Mr. *Nelson*, Author of the Fasts and Festivals of the Church of *England*; I would heartily recommend the reading of it to Mr. *Shirley*, or any one in the least inclined to Enthusiasm.

Tho' Mr. *Shirley's* Reflections on his Brethren, are visible enough to every Reader of his Sermon, yet lest that should not be a sufficient Indication of his Design, he has printed some Lines from the blind Fanatick *Milton*, who, (tho' he was an excellent Poet, yet every one must allow he was an improper Person to appeal to, considering all Circumstances, for the Character of any Clergy) in the Title Page of his Discourse, by which it is certain he could have no other View than defaming his Brethren. It ill becomes a Clergyman to lessen the Characters, or publish even the real Faults and Failings of his Brethren; nay, it is a Sin of a very heinous Nature, because it disqualifies them from doing that Good, they might otherwise do, the Success of their Labours depending in a great Measure on

the good or ill Opinion which their Flocks have of them. It is for this Reason, I suppose, that all Swadlers, from the highest to the lowest, are so industrious in trumpeting the Infirmities of the Clergy, and rather than fail, falsely accusing and laying to their Charge things that they know not, on purpose to alienate the Affections of the People from them, that they may gain the more Profelytes among them. But I should not be surpris'd at this, tho' I cannot but be both surpris'd and concerned, that a Man of Mr. *Sbirley's* Family and Education, should have recourse to such unmanly Arts; for it is the usual Conduct of all Sectaries and Schismaticks, to fall foul upon the Bishops and Clergy, and none, that ever I read of, do more outrageously do so than the Swadlers; the Enemy of Mankind never rais'd up any such, but their first Attack would be upon them. I remember a Passage in the great St. *Cyprian*, where he says, that Heresies and Schisms spring from no other Root but from Contempt, Disrespect, and Disobedience to the Bishops of God's Church; and in his Vindication of himself against a certain Schismatick, by Name (if I remember right) *Puppianus*, who denied his being a Bishop, among several other Proofs of the Truth of his Episcopacy, he uses this as one very convincing one, that never any Persecution arose, either from the Heathen Magistrates, or from Hereticks or Schismaticks, against the Christians of *Cartbage*, but the first Brunt of it was sure to fall upon him, he was sure to be the first proscribed, and to have his Goods confiscated; *ut se* (says he) *non Deo constituyente, saltem Diabolo me Episcopum persequente, credas*; that if you do not believe God constituting, you may at least believe the Devil persecuting me as a Bishop.

In the last Paragraph of that Division of his Sermon, wherein Mr. *Sbirley* lays down his own Duty to his Flock, he tells us that, "if ever there comes an
" Age,

“ Age, in which the Ministers of God’s Word, in-
 “ stead of being holy, shall be found worldly,
 “ proud, covetous, &c. &c. Persecutors of the
 “ Truth, and Opposers of the Spirit; he will ven-
 “ ture, without the Gift of Prophecy, to foretell, that
 “ Christianity in that Age will be treated as Priest-
 “ craft, &c.” P. 11. It is very evident to me, that
 this is the Light in which he looks upon all his Bre-
 thren, and that all these Characters of worldly, proud,
 &c. are thus obliquely and hypothetically given them,
 only on Account of the two last, namely, Persecutors
 of the Truth, and Opposers of the Spirit, by which it
 is plain he means, the Clergy’s endeavouring to main-
 tain the Doctrine, of the Church, against the peculiar
 Doctrines of Methodism, and their not believing or
 allowing every bold and arrogant Pretender, who ei-
 ther fancies or pretends, to be under the immediate
 and extraordinary Influence and Inspiration of the
 Holy Ghost, without producing such Credentials as
 all those, whoever were actually under such Influence,
 &c. produced for theirs; and which the Catholick
 Church of all Ages, required in, or from all such Pre-
 tenders, under the Penalty of being condemned as
 Enthusiasts or Impostors; the former these Men
 call persecuting the Truth, the latter opposing the
 Spirit, *binc illæ Lacrymæ*. Hence proceed all this Ma-
 lice, Virulence, and uncharitable Censures of these
 great Pretenders to Bible Christianity, on the Clergy,
 who if they could be prevailed upon to allow, and sub-
 scribe to all their peculiar and distinguishing Doctrines;
 and to acknowledge themselves to be pneumatical
 or Pneumataphoroi, that is, as full of the Holy Ghost
 as ever the Apostles were, saving only the outward
 working Miracles, which Mr. *Wesley*, in his *Appeals*
 pleads for, as the undoubted Right and Privilege of
 every Christian; if the Clergy (I say) could be prevail-
 ed upon, not to bear their Testimony against these
 groundless Illusions, they would be the Methodists
 own

own white Boys, and I am confident a great Part, if not the whole, of the foregoing invidious, sly, and indirect Defamation of his Brethren would be dropt, and this Compliance of the Clergy, would prevail more with the Methodists, than it seems Charity can do; for it would, I am fully perswaded, cover a Multitude of their Failings and Imperfections.

IN the mean Time, it is to be hoped, that there are but very few, if any at all, of his Brethren, that deserve to be represented in altogether such black Colours as they are here painted; if Mr. *Shirley* knows any that do, he should name him, or endeavour to reform him or them by private Advice, and fraternal Correction, in the Spirit of Meekness and Love, and not thus openly and publickly defame the whole Body of his Brethren; for I do affirm, that the Defamation is not a Bit the less, or the more excusable, by being thus in general, and hypothetically cast upon them, but is thereby greatly aggravated, and the more criminal; it is an accumulated Scandal in which all are involved; and yet every single Person deprived of an Opportunity, or even a Possibility, of clearing himself or his Character, which is the most criminal way of defaming, and leaves the deepest and most dangerous Wounds behind it, because to apply a Remedy is rendered impracticable.

INDEED if the Character which the Methodists give of Mr. *Shirley*, before his Conversion, be true, he seems here to give an exact Copy, or Picture of himself; and so, I suppose, he judges of his Brethren by what he was himself before his Reformation, not without broad Hints, that they cannot be otherwise, unless they follow his Example, in joining with the Methodists. But if any of his Brethren (which God forbid) stand in need of such a Reformation, or *metamorphosis*, as he did, (I speak only by Information from his late Friends) he has not shewed that Prudence and Moderation in his, to induce or incline them to take
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Pattern by it; he has, it is true, avoided *Scylla*, but then he has run himself in *Charybdis*. There is a Medium in all Things, and all Extremes are vicious; there is a middle Course, which is always the safest to be steered, between Levity, Licentiousness, and Profaneness on one Hand, and Pharisaical Superstition, Starchness, and Superciliousness on the other: Cannot Men be as soberly religious as they please? Cannot they be wise to Sobriety, without reflecting upon or censuring their Brethren? May not they make their Light shine before Men, without being the Heralds and Trumpeters of their own Perfections, and publishing them to the World? May not they leave their Actions and Conduct to speak for and recommend themselves? And will not the silent Applause and Testimony of their own Consciences satisfy them, unless the World is apprized what great Saints they are? So that I may justly ask them, as the Poet does such Trumpeters of their own Virtues, *Usque adeone scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter?* Persius.

BUT after all, what if all these Reflections are Faults of their own Creation and Invention? As for Instance, if a Clergyman, who has a large and numerous Family, and an Income hardly sufficient to supply him and them with the necessaries of Life, in any decent way, becoming his sacred Function and Character, if he having a Genius thereto, applies himself to any virtuous Industry, in order to provide for his Charge, that they be not left upon the Parish, after his Death, tho' his doing so be visibly no Hindrance to the discharge of his Duty, such a Clergyman is, by these charitable Censors, condemned as a Worldling and a covetous Person; nay, if he endeavours by the most unexceptionable Means, to better his temporal Circumstances in the Church, he is deemed worse than a Heathen or a Publican, nay than *Simon* the Magician, (see Mr. *Wesley's Address to the Clergy*.) If a Clergyman thinks himself obliged in Conscience, to attend
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that Part and Portion of the Lord's Flock that is committed to his Charge, and labours to do his Duty towards them, according to the best of his Skill and Knowledge, thinking himself accountable to the great Shepherd of the Flock, for them and them only; if he does not thrust his Sickle into another Man's Harvest he is reckoned indolent, a meer Quietist, and intirely void of Christian Zeal. If he does not scruple to enjoy the Gifts of God, and the good Things of this Life, in a more liberal Proportion than the meer Necessities of Nature require; if he is careful to keep up and encourage mutual Hospitality between his Parishioners, he is immediately censured, as our blessed Saviour was by the Scribes and Pharisees, as a Wine-bibber and a Glutton, and a Friend to Publicans and Sinners.

THUS, then, these great Pretenders to Bible Christianity censure all those that do not join with them in their Pharisaical Superstition and Pride; but it is enough for the Servant that he be as his Master, and the Disciple as his Lord; and if the Scribes and Pharisees, their venerable Forefathers, did thus censure our Lord and Master, we cannot expect that these their Successors will afford any better Treatment to us his Servants and Disciples.

“METHINKS, says he, I see one reproach him, (that is one of his Brethren whom he calls Moral Philosophers) had you preached the Spirituality of the Gospel Covenant, I should have laid hold on that as the only Means of Salvation; had your Life and Conversation been truly spiritual, holy, and pious, I would have been charmed with the amiable Example, and would have followed it; on the contrary, I could not be influenced by those poor, hungry Doctrines (so he calls the Doctrines of Christian Morality and a good Life) which you preached, because I did observe your Practice not to be conformable to them, &c.” pag. 11, 12.

THIS

THIS is a fine, plausible, and fanciful Representation, to captivate the Vulgar and to catch Woodcocks; but possibly it may with much greater Truth and Justice be retorted upon himself, and his late Masters and Directors; for, Methinks I hear one reproach him, had you followed the Example of your Lord and Master, and preached true Christian Morality, as he did in his Sermon on the Mount of *Olives*; had you told me that I must work out my own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, and not to depend on any other than the Aid and Assistance of Grace and the Holy Spirit, to help and strengthen my own sincere and hearty Endeavours, in the diligent Use of the Means of Grace, I might have laboured to avoid my present Doom; but, instead of this, you flattered me with false Hopes of the extraordinary and miraculous Inspirations, and supernatural Powers and Privileges of the Holy Ghost, with being as full of the Spirit as the holy Apostles were; you daily and constantly preached these Things unto me; your almost constant Subject and Theme were these, and Justification by Faith alone, without the Works of Evangelical Obedience; nay, you told me, that God does not give justifying Faith to the Righteous, or to those that are prepared and disposed to receive his Favours, but to the Wicked and Ungodly, who never did any one good Thing, but every Thing that deserved Death and Damnation: [See Mr. *Wesley's Appeal*, in the Place before referred to] I therefore neglected, nay, I despised all good Works, thinking the more Good I did, the farther (according to this Doctrine) I was from, and the more indisposed and unfit to receive justifying Faith; I took a strong Confidence and Presumption for Faith, and every Impulse of my own heated Imagination for the immediate Dictate of the Holy Ghost: I thereupon became spiritually proud, supercilious, and an uncharitable Censurer of my Brethren, that were not of my way

way of thinking, and I looked upon them as no Christians; but now, alas! notwithstanding all my Confidence and Assurance, I am doomed to everlasting Misery, and this occasioned by your flattering my Pride and Vanity, and filling me with a Mouthful of Moon-shine.

THUS, Sir, you see how easy a Matter it is to retort Mr. *Shirley's* Representation back upon himself and his Masters; with this Difference, that his Representation is only founded upon his own false and uncharitable Censures, but mine upon the publick, notorious, and avowed Doctrines and Principles of the Methodists.

AND NOW, Sir, I am afraid I have tired your Patience with this long Letter, which I am persuaded contains nothing but what occurred to your own good Sense and Judgment, upon your first reading Mr. *Shirley's* Sermon; but as I promised to give you my Sentiments of it, I was willing to give it a thorough Examination, and do hope and desire, that if any Thing has dropped from my Pen which is not according to sound Doctrine, you will be so kind as to let me know it with the Freedom and Sincerity of a Brother and a Friend; *Humanum est errare*, and no Man is infallible; the greatest Defect, I apprehend, is, that you will find Fault with the Prolixity of it, and indeed it is what I designed at first as much as might be to avoid; but I know not how it has stole upon me insensibly, it is my Foible, but I hope a pardonable one, as it is confessed and acknowledged. I have no Sort of Prejudice to Mr. *Shirley*, I wish him all the Happiness he can desire, and am only sorry that he does not take the truly Christian and pacifick Advice of his Curate in his Letter of the 24th of *July*; for how much soever he despises his Youth, yet I assure him, it would be no Sort of Shame or Reproach for him to learn from him: St. *Peter* humbly and patiently

tiently bore the Reproof of *St. Paul*, though he was reckoned his Superior in Age, and of a longer Standing in the Apostolick College; I wish Mr. *Sbirley* may follow his Example. I am,

Reverend and worthy Sir,

Hollymount,
Decem. 3,
1758.

Your very affectionate Brother,

And most humble Servant,

JAMES CLARK.

F I N I S.



